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KUNJALIS
ADMIRALS OF CALICUT

O.K. NAMBIAR

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The Kunjalis–Admirals of Calicut tells the exciting story of the hundred years of naval conflict between the Zamorins of Calicut and the Portuguese in the Indian Ocean. With the discovery of the sea route to India by Vasco da Gama, India's freedom of the seas was challenged and the safety of her coast endangered by Portuguese pirates. In this hour of danger, the whole of Calicut rose as one man under the banner of its Zamorins and, led by the valiant dynasty of Calicut admirals known by the honorofic title of *Kunjalis*, gave battle to the Portuguese on the sea. This series of encounters lasted from A.D. 1500 to 1600 and reached a climax in the near destruction of the Portuguese, but owing to the irresolute policy of the Zamorins and the defection of Kunjali the Fourth, the tables were finally turned against India. Control of the Indian Ocean passed to the Portuguese and later to the other Western powers that followed them.

Though the account is strictly historical and impartial, the events themselves and the author's brisk style make this a story of high adventure.

The book has twelve plates reproducing contemporary Portuguese portraits and maps.

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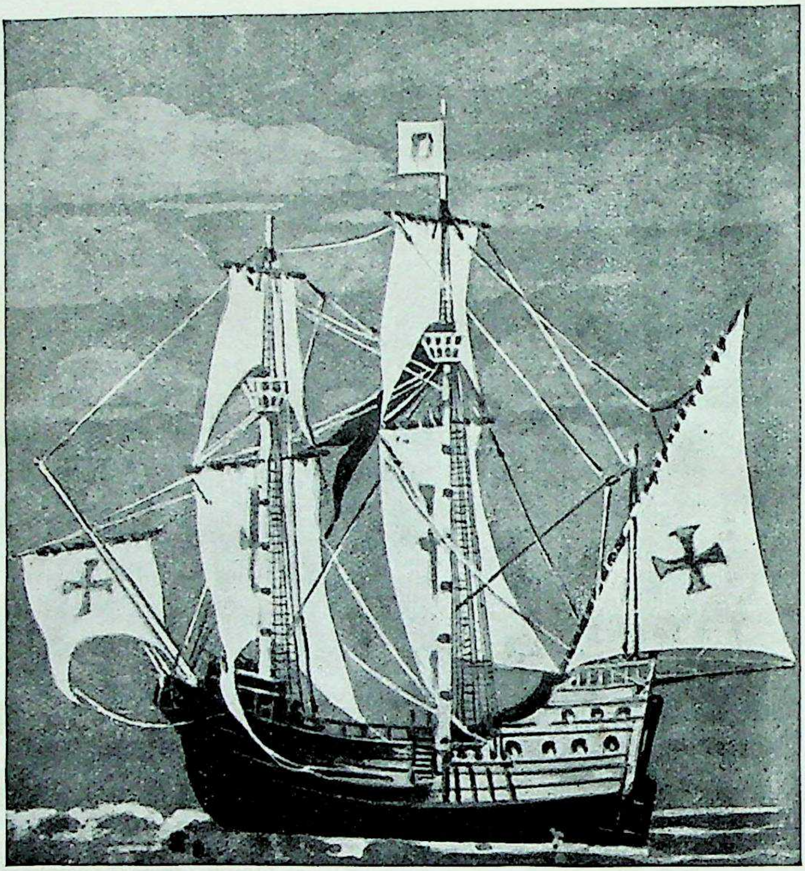
ADMIRALS OF CALICUT



S. Gabriel—Vasco da Gama's Ship (From Noticia Solere a navo Lisbon)

THE KUNJALIS

ADMIRALS OF CALICUT

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For My Wife
JANAKI

Preface

THIS BOOK is a revised and amplified version of my earlier *Portuguese Pirates and Indian Seamen* published in 1955. The theme of this book is the hundred years' naval war fought between India and Portugal in the sixteenth century and the heroic part played by the Kunjalis, the admirals of Calicut. The first shot which started the war was fired by the Portuguese soon after Vasco da Gama's first visit to Calicut. A long and bitter contest followed—Indian seamen led by the Kunjalis found themselves in a deadly grapple with the world's greatest maritime power of the sixteenth century, suffered initial reverses, but continued the struggle to a successful conclusion about the end of the century.

The war was principally a war for the freedom of the seas and free-trade. As it dragged on, it took a religious and political colour. Long accustomed to free-trade and the freedom of the seas, Indian seamen bitterly resented Portuguese interference, and defended their invaded rights by vigorous naval action. The struggle went on well into the next century, but by then the Indo-Portuguese conflict had ceased to be clear-cut; other European powers came on the scene, and the pattern of conflict became confused.

In the earlier phase of the Indo-Portuguese conflict, the Portuguese showed great courage and enterprise. Their designs prospered because India was a house divided against itself. The princes and the petty chieftains were constantly at war among themselves. By the end of the first quarter of the sixteenth century, Indian princes recognised that not only was their trade in jeopardy, but their political interests also were equally threatened. Their tragic lack of cohesion, however, made them incapable of attempting a joint defence of the country. Besides, there was an unmanly reliance on foreign help, aid from Persia and Egypt in ships and armament, which came to them only in untimely and tardy instalments. It is true that there was what may be called an Indo-Egyptian axis opposed to Portuguese encroachment on the trade of the Indian ocean. Though this alliance produced few positive or spectacular results, it helped India to a speedier attainment of parity in naval armament. Besides, it brought a measure of relief to our seamen by causing a diversion of a part of the Portuguese naval strength in expeditions towards the Middle East. It was only after the final abandonment of all hopes of effective foreign aid and after the fusion of the several dynastic interests of the Indian princes into what may be described broadly as a national resolve to expel the enemy that India came close to victory. The Indian confederation of 1570 which brought together the Zamorin of Calicut, Adil Khan of Bijapur, Nizam Shah of Ahmednagar and the queen of Gersoppa, put an end to Portuguese political ambition. Portuguese piracy continued sporadically, conducted more or less by force of habit, but the Portuguese had to face severe retaliation.

The Portuguese feared the proud Zamorins of Calicut and their intrepid admirals so greatly that they never risked a military adventure in the Zamorin's territory. Malabar in those days was a vast military camp, and the Zamorin was in a position to muster, at a moment's notice, an immense number of well-trained Nayars led by his feudal chiefs.

The Kunjalis, the admirals of Calicut, were Moplas, local converts to Islam. They were called the *Marakkars*—a word which means navigators of ships. The word Kunjali is an honorific title conferred on the dynasty by the Zamorin. It means *Ali, the beloved*, and corresponds to the title "Amigo" with which the Portuguese king rewarded Vasco da Gama on his return from his famous exploratory voyage. The eldest member of the Marakkar family was appointed admiral. The office was hereditary.

The Kunjalis served the Zamorins with courage and devotion. Their captains, all Moslems, were brave seamen whose gallant exploits are the theme of many a ballad sung by the seafaring folks of Malabar even to this day. Of the four Kunjali Marakkars, the last, Mohamad Kunjali Marakkar, described by Portuguese writers as Kunjali the fourth, proved to be a rebel. Regarding his defection, a word of explanation is due. The dynastic policy of the Zamorins tended to be irresolute. Because of the peculiar law of succession followed by the royal house of Calicut, the Zamorins were full of years when they came to the throne.

Frequency of deaths and successions occasionally brought to the Calicut throne Zamorins who were weak and wavering, and ready to temporise. Continuity of dynastic policy was interrupted. Besides, political exigencies arising from the long-continued war with Cochin entered the Zamorin's calculations in regulating his relations with the Portuguese. Between 1498 and 1600, there were only four successors to the Calicut Admiralty, while during the same period there were fifteen Zamorins in succession on the throne of Calicut, according to Krishna Iyer's list (*The Zamorins of Calicut*, Norman Press, Calicut, 1934). During this period, the dynastic policy of the Calicut admirals remained steady and resolute. Besides, their dynastic hostility to the Portuguese was embittered by religious rancour, for the Portuguese had introduced the spirit of the old Crusades in their trade war. We must not forget that the Kunjalis had their private score to settle for their kith and kin killed in the battles.

Another reason was the suicidal concession given by the Zamorin to the Portuguese whereby the latter were allowed to build a fort at Ponnani. Kunjali the third, the greatest of Calicut admirals, foresaw the danger and warned the king. But the Zamorin did not listen. The admiral established a new port at Kotta to counteract in some measure the danger to which the Zamorin's fatal concession had exposed the whole scheme of Calicut's naval defence. Kunjali died with a heavy heart. His nephew, Mohamad Kunjali Marakkar, an overgrown vassal, broke the bond of feudal duty, and rebelled against his sovereign. The Portuguese took advantage of his defection. Combining diplomacy with treachery, they brought about the end of the last of the great admirals of Calicut.

This defection cannot be entirely blamed on the admiral. The times were rapidly changing; the old feudal order was in a state of dissolution, and the light of the modern age with its new social and political awakening was breaking over the entire land. The new aspirations which had begun to disturb the old loyalties can be detected in the several folk songs of the period.

I believe this account describing the naval traditions of our people is not without its lessons for us. We do not have to look far back into the dim ages of our ancient history or reconstruct ruined fresco to discover evidence of our maritime enterprise. Our seamen of the sixteenth century who opposed successfully the mightiest sea power of the world provide us with more recent examples of naval prowess. It serves to teach us the lesson of unity and self-reliance, of courage and sacrifice.

We need these lessons now.

Let me close these remarks with an acknowledgement of the help I received from various quarters.

I owe my first prompting to write this book to a sea-song sung by a nameless Malabar ferryman. Sardar K. M. Panikkar's valuable book, *Malabar and the Portuguese*, gave me a further fillip to explore the obscure areas of this story. I owe a special debt to Professor Garrett Mattingly of Columbia University, New York, with whom I had the advantage of discussing this subject. I must acknowledge my debt to the Indian Council of Cultural Relations, New Delhi, for their research grant which enabled me to visit a few historical archives during my European tour in 1960.

I am indebted to the authorities of the British Museum Library and to the British Council, Madras, for their courteous help. I owe a debt to Rev. Schurhammar for the assistance he gave me when I visited the Vatican Library and the Gregorian University Library in Rome.

To my colleagues and students who read the proofs, and to Miss B. Kavery who prepared the index, I owe my thanks.

O. K. NAMBIAR

Central College,
Bangalore
1 January 1963

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Plan of the city of Goa

Don Affonso De Albuquerque

Calicut

Town of Cannanore

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Siege of the fort of the Cunhale by Andre Furtado de Mendoca

Don Andre Furtado De Mendoca

Map of India

INTRODUCTORY

Eastern Trade Routes and the Indian Ocean

OF ALL the seas in the world the Mediterranean and the Red Sea have the richest recorded history. Girt round by the sites of old civilisations and the ancient seats of powerful monarchies, these seas were the scenes of epics and legends which have coloured the stuff of Western culture. It is no wonder then that Western historians have devoted a greater degree of attention to these seas than to any other sea of the world.

The Indian Ocean is the theatre of the incidents related in this narrative. This Ocean had been known long to the West, and from very early times western mercantile enterprise had ventured on the navigation of these waters. But it is only when the bold Arab sailors came on the scene that we see the establishment of a regular and systematic maritime traffic on these seas. What were formerly voyages of adventure soon developed into regular and seasonal commercial cruises conducted more for profit than for glory. Later, when Western Europe, seeking a route to the riches of the orient, burst into the Indian Ocean at the end of the sixteenth century, Arab navigation faced a challenge to which it gradually succumbed.

The story of the navigation of the Indian Ocean is closely linked with the story of the eastern trade route. From the earliest days of history the Indian Ocean was traversed by ships carrying commerce and culture between the East and the West. The great cities of the ancient and the medieval world rose to importance and wealth either because they were directly engaged in the eastern trade, or from the fact that they stood on the ancient trade routes along which the spices and the silks of the East were transported. Ancient Chaldaea owed her prosperity to the commerce she carried on with India and Ceylon on the one hand, and with Arabia, Ethiopia and Egypt on the other. Babylon and Nineveh were great entrepots which handled the trade passing from the East to the

West. The Phoenicians owed their prosperity in a great measure to the Mediterranean branch of this trade.

Assyria, Greece and Rome, in course of time, drove the Phoenicians out of the Mediterranean trade. The trade of the Red Sea, Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf fell into the hands of the adventurous Arabs whose commercial enterprise carried them even beyond the Indian Ocean to the China seas. The Arabs held on to this branch of the maritime trade till the eventful Portuguese penetration into the Indian Ocean in the beginning of the sixteenth century.

When we look back at the commerce of the ancient and the medieval world, we are struck by the great importance of the eastern trade. Great cities like Tyre and Sidon, the principal trading stations of the Phoenicians, derived their importance from the fact that the Mediterranean ports were supplied with eastern merchandise from these ports. Goods brought from India by the Red Sea used to be carried a long way overland to Tyre and Sidon. Later, the Phoenicians felt the need for a port nearer to the Arabian Gulf and established the city of Rhino-Koloura or El Arish for the easier handling of the eastern trade. Indian goods received by overland carriage from the Red Sea terminal were transhipped from this port to all the European and Egyptian ports in the Mediterranean. Under David and Solomon the Israelites attempted, with moderate success, the capture of this trade. King David, we learn, obtained possession of the harbours of Elath and Eziongeber on the Red Sea, and King Solomon despatched a fleet to Tarshish and Ophir. The Israelites attempted to control the trade of the African coast and in some measure that of India brought to the Red Sea by Arab vessels. By establishing the city of "Tadmore in the Wilderness", Solomon also tried to secure a part of the trade of the Persian Gulf.

The Rise of Greece, Egypt and Rome

With the rise of the Macedonian power under Alexander the Great, the Phoenicians lost their monopoly of the eastern trade. Sidon and Tyre had gained enormous wealth and importance through their eastern trade. Alexander dealt a death blow to Phoenician trade by capturing Sidon and destroying Tyre. After the conquest of Egypt, Alexander founded the city of Alexandria with the object of using it as a commercial port on the Mediterranean for the eastern trade that passed up the Red Sea. After the death of Alexander, Egypt was ruled by the Ptolemies under whom the arts, commerce and navigation received great encouragement. Alexandria grew in importance and became the most important mart in the world. Ptolemy Philadelphus is said to have planned the construction of a canal, a hundred cubits broad and thirty cubits deep, between Suez (Arsinoe) on the Red Sea and the Pelusiac, or the eastern branch of the Nile in order to carry the products of India to that capital wholly by water. But this work was never completed. As an alternative route Ptolemy Philadelphus built a city on the western shore of the Red Sea to which he gave the name Berenike, which soon developed into the principal emporium of the trade with India. From Berenike the goods were carried overland to Koptos, a city three miles distant from the Nile, wherefrom a navigable canal communicating with the Nile carried the eastern merchandise to Alexandria. For over two hundred and fifty years this route remained the main artery of eastern commerce.

The course these trading-ships took from Berenike was along the Arabian shore to Syagros (modern Ras Fertak) whence they followed the coast of Persia, proceeding either to Pattala (Tatta) at the head of the lower delta of the Indus or to some other emporium on the west coast of India.

During the period when Egypt was able to control the Indian trade by means of her superior navy, the volume of Indian trade carried along the old routes which led from India up the Euphrates and the Tigris was greatly diminished. The more northern countries, however, continued to be served with Indian products along the overland route from India to the Oxus and thence to the Caspian Sea and further, by land and river, to the Black Sea.

Alexandria used to be visited by Carthagenian merchants to collect Indian goods which they carried to all the Mediterranean ports and even beyond the Pillars of Hercules to the west coast of the Iberian peninsula. With the rise of the Roman Empire, Carthage became engaged in a serious trade rivalry with Rome which ended only after a long and ruthless war, in the triumph of Rome. Rome subsequently conquered Egypt and the importance of Alexandria as a mart for the eastern trade not only revived, but increased as a result of Roman enterprise. With the Roman conquest of Syria, the other route for the conveyance of eastern goods through the ports of Persian Gulf and up the Euphrates fell into the Roman hands. Thus Rome enjoyed a monopoly of the trade with the East. Pliny estimated that India took 55,000,000 Sesterces (500,000 sterling) annually and the goods purchased brought a hundred times that amount when sold in Europe.

Hippalus

In the first century A.D. a sensational discovery was made by a Greek named Hippalus, who, observing the regularity of the seasonal winds, boldly stood out to sea from Cape Fertak in Arabia and sailing with the South-West monsoon (from the Arabic *Maussam*) trade-winds, found a direct route to the pepper-bearing country of Malabar.

Thus a direct passage to India, much shorter than the older coast-hugging voyage, was made possible. Pliny (A.D. 23-70) describes the new route to India after Hippalus' sensational discovery in these words:

> 'From Alexandria to Juliopolis is 2 miles. There our cargo destined for India is embarked on the Nile and is carried to Koptos, which is 303 miles and the voyage takes 12 days. From Koptos goods are conveyed to Berenike on the Arabian Gulf halting at stations for water, a distance of 258 miles by caravan and this journey was finished on the 12th day. About midsummer, ships take their departure from Berenike and in 30 days time reach Okelis (Gella) at the mouth of Arabian Gulf or Kane on the coast of Arabia Felix. From here, they sail straight in 40 days to Mouziris,[1] the first emporium in India. They begin their homeward voyage in the Egyptian month of Thibi, which answers to our December: they sail with the north-east wind and when they enter Arabian Gulf, meet with a south or south-west wind and thus complete the voyage in less than a year.'

The author of *The Circumnavigation of the Erythræan Sea* states that the inhabitants of the Coromandel coast traded in their own vessels with those of Malabar and the interior trade of Barygaze (Broach) was considerable and that there was at all seasons, a number of country ships to be found in the harbour of Mouziris. Strabo also mentions that the most valuable production of Taprobane (Ceylon) was carried to the different emporia of India. Thus the traders of Egypt might have been supplied with them without their having to extend their voyages beyond Mouziris.[1]

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[1] Mouziris has been identified by W. Logan as Muyiri Kodu, modern Kodungallur. Logan, W., *A Manual of Malabar*, Madras Government Press, 1887, p. 76.

An Egyptian merchant Kosmas Indicopleustes (who visited India in A.D. 525), has left an account of his experience in India. According to him, the west coast of India was the chief seat of the pepper trade and Taprobane a great place of trade to which were imported the silk of Sinae (China) and the precious spices of the Eastern countries which were conveyed thence to all parts of India, to Persia and to the Arabian Gulf. Kosmas also refers to the revival of Persian interest in the Indian trade.[2]

When the Mohammedans conquered Persia the Indian trade passed into their hands and later, when they occupied Egypt, they excluded the Greeks from all intercourse with Alexandria and the Indian trade. The Arabs actively engaged in navigation and secured eastern products straight from the countries of their origin. It was Caliph Omar who founded Busra at the head of the Persian Gulf. Its advantageous situation gave it control in one direction over the navigation up the Euphrates and the Tigris, and in another direction on the shipping in the Persian Gulf. In course of time Busra became as important a mart of eastern trade as Alexandria.

When these trade routes passed into the hands of the Arabs, Alexandria became closed to the Europeans, and the sea ports of the Mediterranean ceased to be supplied with eastern goods. An alternative caravan route—the famous Silk Road—from Chemsi to the Oxus and then up to the Caspian was opened. It supplied eastern products to Europe. This route led from Chemsi, a western trading city in China, to the river Oxus. The overland route from the Indus region also met here, thence proceeding to the Caspian along the river Cyprus to the Phasis and onward to Euxine or the Black Sea and so on to Constantinople. This alternative route terminating at Constantinople attracted a great part of the European trade in eastern products and accounted in a large measure for the prosperity and importance of that city. Now Constantinople became the centre from which Indian and eastern goods were supplied to the Mediterranean ports in one direction and in another direction to North and Western Europe. The latter trade was mainly handled by the Avers of the Danubian provinces.

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[1] Danvers, F. C., *The Portuguese in India*, W. H. Allen, London, 1894. See introduction.

[2] Ibid.

Venice and Genoa

A word about the rise of the trading republic of Venice is relevant here. Driven out by Aleric to take refuge in the islands of the Adriatic, the people of Venetian Lombardy were forced to depend on navigation and commerce. By the close of the tenth century they had become powerful and established a republic. Genoa followed the example of Venice and established itself as a commercial state. During the Crusades, we find Venice, Genoa and Pisa united in rendering help to the Crusaders. They sent supplies in their ships and bargained for the privilege of establishing factories in the places secured by the Crusaders. There was a long and bitter struggle between Genoa and Venice for the trade of the East passing through Constantinople. Their intrigues and counter-intrigues with the Emperor of Byzantium need not detain us. At the end of this period of deadly trade rivalry Venice emerged victorious and became supreme in the eastern trade.

The Turks Astride the Route

The decline of the commercial prosperity of Venice began towards the close of the fifteenth century. The Turks had advanced in Europe and they now took over the oriental trading stations. One after the other, the land and sea routes to India and China were closed to Western Europe. After the capture of Constantinople, Venice had only an intermittent trade with the East through the Alexandrian route and even this was subject to the caprice of the Mamelukes of Egypt. Besides, this trade suffered from the ban imposed by the Pope. Venice had jealous enemies in Lombardy, Romagna and Naples. Their lingering trade was finally extinguished by the discovery of the sea route to India by the Portuguese in 1498.

Thus it will be seen that oriental trade played a very considerable part in the great historical convulsions of Europe, Africa and

Asia. Indeed all the famous cities of the ancient and medieval world rose to wealth and power as a consequence of their connection in one way or other with eastern trade. Greece, Rome, Carthage, Alexandria, Constantinople, Bagdad, all were vitally interested in it and they were affected by it. The wars and rivalries between nations appear to have had a direct bearing on the possession of the eastern trade routes and cities.

The Portuguese Irruption

With the irruption of the Portuguese into the Indian seas (1498) we see the emergence of a new pattern of world-rivalry for eastern trade.

Almost simultaneously with the discovery of the sea route to India there was the discovery of America. These two events had the effect of shifting the centres of trade from the Levant to Western Europe. Till this time the luxuries of the East were amassed in Damascus, Ormuz, Cairo and Constantinople. Now Lisbon flourished at the expense of these ancient cities.

What followed the arrival of the Portuguese in the placid waters of Mere Erythreum forms the subject matter of the following narrative.

ONE

The Quest

> "To my most beloved son in Christ, Thomas the illustrious Emperor of the Indians, Health and Apostolic benediction: There often has reached us a constant rumour that your serenity and also all who are the subjects of your Kingdom are true Christians."
>
> —*Letter given by Pope Eugene IV to his envoys to Prester John.*

IN THE fifteenth century reports about the fabulous wealth of India and the imaginary accounts of the realm of Prester John fired the imagination of Christian nations, notably of the Portuguese, and served as a stimulus for their great voyages of discovery. Besides, when the Moors whose enterprise had filled Europe with eastern luxuries were finally expelled from the Iberian Peninsula, the flow of eastern products into Western Europe was interrupted, and this was another reason for the search for a sea route to the East.

The search was intensified during the reign of Prince Henry the Navigator, who, as Grand Master of the Order of Christ, had large revenues under his control to spend in the cause of trade and religion. Dom Pedro, his brother, was a great traveller and he had, in the course of a great journey lasting well over twelve years, acquired an invaluable map of the world prepared by Marco Polo. Europe, in those times, did not have any clear idea as regards the situation of the famous countries of the East—India, China and Ceylon—which produced silks and spices. A map of the East made by the greatest traveller known to the Middle Ages was indeed of immense value.

Between 1416 and 1441, every year, Dom Henry sent out two or three ships along the west coast of Africa. It was vaguely conjectured, that the Indian Ocean could be reached by sailing down the west coast of that continent. One of the earlier expeditions had reached Cape Non; another discovered the Islands of Porto Santo and Madeira. In 1434, Cape Bojador was doubled by yet another of these expeditions, and this gave rise to the hope and assurance of a passage to India—the goal of all these enterprises. In anticipation of success Dom Henry secured in advance a Bull from the Pope conferring on him and his successors in perpetuity, a concession of all the lands that might be discovered beyond Cape Bojador "including India".

These expeditions succeeded among other things in establishing a flourishing slave trade on the West African coast. The captured Negroes were converted to Christianity before they were sold in the home markets. The discovery of the Azores was made in 1433,[1] and this was soon followed by the discovery of Cape Verde Islands.

But Dom Henry did not live to see the fulfilment of his dream —the discovery of India.

After his death in 1460, his nephew King Alfonso V continued the quest. From the information gained from numerous travellers he projected a map of the world showing the Indian Ocean and some of its islands—a remarkable piece of work completed after three years' labour in 1464. He sent a few caravels down the coast of Africa as far as Sierra Leone. In 1471, the king's explorer, Fernão Gomez crossed the equinoctial line and extended his discoveries further to Cape St. Catherine.

It was in a spirit of hope and adventure that these explorers pushed their way south down the west coast of Africa. An immense continent lay between them and their goal thwarting their efforts to break into the Indian Ocean. Historical memory loves to dwell on their enterprise and recalls the earlier northward navigation of the Phoenicians who braved the terrors of Biscay in the dim centuries before the Christian era and beached their vessels on the inhospitable coast of Cornwall for ladings of tin and pelts. From the remotest days of which there is record or rumour, the spirit of man has been pushing back his horizons to reveal the far corners of the earth. The fame of India was at once a call and a challenge to the spirit of exploration of the fifteenth century explorers of the Western World.

India still remained far away, elusive in a dark corner of an imperfectly understood world, when Alfonso died. He was succeeded by his son João II. João II did not give up the quest. One of his expeditions led by Diogo Cão reached the Congo river. He brought back with him reports of a powerful emperor named Ogane who, according to rumours, lived in the deep interior of Africa. Popular imagination at once identified Ogane with Jeovanni, Prester John, and the old legend received fresh confirmation and wider currency. The Prete was, in medieval European imagination, the king magnificent, a great knight of Christianity to whom the kings of the East, including those of India, owed allegiance. The spread of Christianity and the development of the Indo-European trade, it was hoped, could be secured through an alliance with this powerful emperor, and João II sent expeditions, both by land and sea, to seek the country of Prester John.[1]

---

[1] The Genoese map of 1351 (Lorentian Library, Florence) shows the Azores. The navigators of Prince Henry effectually "rediscovered" or rather "found" the Azores.

Both the land and sea expeditions achieved notable success, memorable even in an age of great geographical discoveries. Indeed, the expedition by land proved even more successful than that sent out by the sea.

João Peres de Covilhão and Alfonso de Paiva, two of the emissaries despatched by João II, having reached Aden, parted company, the former engaging himself to discover the route to India and the latter undertaking to seek the land of Ethiopia where, according to recent reports, the Prete had his court. Covilhão, embarking on an Arab vessel, reached the coast of Malabar and indeed set his foot in Calicut, where he saw "great quantities of Pepper and Ginger". Thereafter, he returned to Aden and thence proceeded South to Sofala. Here, he met many Arab sailors from whom he gathered a first hand account of the trade, the sea route and the situation of the more important islands of the Indian Ocean. On his return to Cairo, he transmitted this valuable information to his king and pointed out that if the ships which traded with Guinea were to continue their course, they might gain a passage to the eastern seas. This piece of information confirmed the theories which had been entertained till then and gave a greater incentive to the eastern enterprise. Alfonso de Paiva died in the course of the journey, and it now fell to Covilhão's share to seek the land of the Prete. The search took him to Ethiopia, where he not only met the great king but also won the king's confidence. The court of Prester John was not far from Zeila. This most remarkable traveller was not destined to return to his country. He lived the rest of his days in Ethiopia in great honour and wealth.

---

[1] In the frontispiece of a popular Italian poem on Prester John by Guilano Dati (1445-1524) Bishop of St. Leon in Calabria, the following title is given: "The great magnificence of Prester John, Lord of Greater India and of Ethiopia, Presto Giovanni de India Ethiope."

It was Bartholomeu de Diaz, one of the brave seamen sent out by King João II, who, proceeding down the west coast of Africa, rounded for the first time the Southern Cape of that continent without knowing it. He encountered heavy storms at the cape, but the intrepid captain sailed on in spite of the entreaties of his sailors to turn back. Diaz, however, did not venture into the Indian Ocean but returned to Portugal in 1487 after having been on the voyage for seventeen months, and reported to the king. The king not only knew his geography but also the significance of this voyage. He renamed the stormy cape (Cabo Tormentoso) the Cape of Good Hope.

When King João died in 1495, he was succeeded by King Manoel. Abraham Zakut, a Jewish mathematician and astrologer of renown, having examined the king's horoscope and finding it favourable to the discovery of a sea route to India, the king continued the efforts of his adventurous predecessors. The construction of three ships of a special design capable of long and hazardous voyage in the Indian Ocean started by King João was completed, and they were made ready for another venture. The king chose Vasco da Gama as the commander of this expedition. The fleet consisted of four ships, the *Sao Gabriel* (120 tons), the *Sao Raphael* (100 tons), *Berrio* (50 tons) and a store ship of 200 tons burden. The whole force in this fleet numbered 160 men. The *Sao Gabriel* was commanded by Vasco da Gama. His brother Paulo da Gama and Nicolao Coelho commanded the other ships.

The ships were constructed on designs prepared by Bartholomeu de Diaz and João Infante, who, having doubled the Cape knew better than anyone else the best style of ships suited for the purpose. The Royal Academy of Sciences at Lisbon has preserved a description of the *Sao Gabriel.*

> 'The appearance of this vessel was of a most irregular shape. In the bay there was a large forecastle, and the stern was considerably raised above the water-line, this conjunction of forms giving the ship the enormous floating power and great strength, but as regards nautical conditions, of a very deficient character.'

It would appear from drawings and documents, believed to be authentic, that the dimensions of the *Sao Gabriel* were as follows:

'Length at water-line, 19m.5; extreme length, 25m.60; beam

> 8m.5, or about one third of the extreme length; draught forwards, 1m.70; draught invert 2m.30. The tonnage of the Sao Gabriel is stated in records to have been 100 tons and was supposed to have carried, when fully equipped, 178 tons. The rigging consisted of three masts, and a pole in the bow answering the purpose of a bow-sprit, the sails being six in number, viz., mainsail, foresail, mizen, spritsail and the two topsails. The Sao Gabriel carried an armament of 20 guns, and on main-top mast a white flag with the Portuguese arms of the time of Don Manoel. Besides this, she bore at the top, the distinctive red flag of a Captain-Mor.'[1]

The ships were well-provisioned. A detailed account of the ship's lading is available. Apart from spare tackle and sets of sails, munitions, stores of food and water, the king supplied the ships with plenty of all sorts of merchandise, much silver and gold and costly gifts for presentation to the rulers of the countries, where they might put into port. There were slaves too, "who knew all the languages which might be fallen in with". The ship had a priest for confession and an apothecary to attend to the sick.

Thus on the 25th March of the year 1497, the expedition set sail from Belem. While rounding the Cape, Vasco da Gama encountered a violent storm. The crew made proposals to turn back and even conspired to mutiny, but the bold navigator "threatened to throw overboard anyone who might speak of such a thing, as he had sworn that he would not turn back one span's breadth until he had obtained the information he had come to seek". The storm continued. On board the *Berrio* a mutiny was hatched but Vasco da Gama seized the ringleaders and suppressed the contemplated rising.

On Christmas Day the expedition came in sight of land on the east coast of Africa. The land was therefore called Terra de Natal. The *Berrio* was declared not sea-worthy and beyond repair and it was decided to break her up to repair the other vessels. Pursuing the voyage on the 24th February 1498, with only two ships (the store-ship having been already dispatched back to Portugal under the command of Nunes after storing away the supplies in the other vessels) the expedition arrived at Mozambique in the following month.

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[1] Danvers, F.C., *The Portuguese in India*, W.H. Allen, London, 1894, pp. 43-44.

In those days there was considerable traffic on the Indian Ocean. A large number of vessels annually crossed the Arabian Sea from the African or Arabian coast to India and Ceylon or sailed to countries farther East. While in these waters, Vasco da Gama had the good fortune to fall in with a Moorish broker, Davane, from Gujarat, who knew the Indian Sea very well and was also an expert pilot. To this man Vasco da Gama was much indebted for the success of the expedition, for Davane gave him not only expert pilotage but by his good counsel saved the Portuguese from the dangers of Arab jealousy. At Melinde the Portuguese established cordial relations with the king. The king gave them two pilots, who had orders to guide the Portuguese ships to India.

Vasco da Gama set sail from Melinde on the 6th August 1498. After twenty days' voyage, they saw on the eastern horizon a large blue mass which, on a closer approach, became clearly defined as the famous landmark of the Kolathiri kingdom—Mount Deli.[1] Coasting along within sight of land, the pilots "finally cast anchor off the town of Capocate,[2] which stood two leagues to the North of the great city of Calicut", and the goal of the expedition was reached, not without dangers and hardships, after an eventful voyage, on Sunday, the 26th August 1498.

This voyage does not rank high among the voyages of exploration, for Vasco da Gama was neither the first man to round the Cape nor was he the first to cross the Indian Ocean. From the day of Hippalus the Indian Ocean was criss-crossed with sea-lanes along which ships had plied regularly every season. It would be wrong, therefore, to call this a voyage of discovery. In fact, the only discovery Vasco da Gama may be credited with was the discovery of these existing sea-lanes along which he was conducted by the courtesy of an Indian pilot. Though the voyage has no great significance as an act of exploration, it had very serious and far-reaching consequences on the history of Asian nations. It is with one sector of it that we shall concern ourselves in the following chapters.

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[1] Kappat or Kappa Katavu.
[2] Also called Ely.

Two

Calicut

At the turn of the fifteenth century the city of Calicut was at the height of its prosperity. It was a far-famed centre of commerce visited by the ships of every nation from China to Europe. It was here that the merchandise of China and Malacca was exchanged for that of Persia and Europe.

The prosperity of Calicut was closely linked with the maritime and commercial enterprise of the Arabs. Prior to the rise of Calicut the chief Indian marts lay farther south in Cochin and Quilon. The early Zamorins of Calicut undertook military expeditions and arranged mercantile treaties to secure for Calicut a major share of Indian sea trade which, after Hippalus' discovery of the seasonal waftage of the monsoons, grew into so large a volume that India's trade with the Far East which had till then enjoyed primacy was reduced to a trickle.

By means of wise and equitable mercantile regulations the dynasty of the Zamorins had encouraged foreign merchants to resort to his port in large numbers. From the days of the first Zamorin who established Calicut as his capital in the first half of the ninth century to the time of the visit of Abd-er-Razzak in 1442, the port of Calicut had gathered to itself an ever-increasing volume of trade. Abd-er-Razzak writes:

> 'Calicut is a perfectly secure harbour which, like that of Ormuz, brings together merchants from every city and from every country. In it are to be found abundance of precious articles brought thither from maritime countries.... It contains a considerable number of Mussalmans who are constant residents and have built two mosques. Security and justice are so firmly established in this city, that the most wealthy merchants bring thither... considerable cargoes, which they unload and unhesitatingly send into the markets without thinking in the meantime of any necessity of checking the account or of keeping watch over the goods. ...When a sale is effected, they levy a duty on the goods of one fortieth part; if they are not sold, they make no charge whatsoever.

> ...At Calicut, every ship, whatever place it may come from or wheresoever it may be bound, when it puts into this port is treated like other vessels and has no trouble of any kind to put up with....'

This picture of the maritime commerce of Asia presents a striking contrast to what we witness in Europe in the fifteenth century. For one thing the commerce carried on on the Indian Ocean was of so great a magnitude and its arteries so far-reaching and so well and regularly supplied that the European commerce of the same period appears both timid and meagre in comparison. The Indian Ocean was not infested by pirates to the same degree as were the Mediterranean and the English Channel. Piracy in the Mediterranean regularly preyed on that trickle of retail trade in eastern goods which Venetian and Genoese galleys carried to Western Europe. It was so great a menace to sea-borne trade in Europe that, surprising as it may seem, it was cheaper to send goods from London to Venice by the overland route up the Rhine and across the Alps, than it was to send them by sea. The expenses incurred to provide defence against pirates were heavy. Great battles were sometimes fought between merchants and pirates.[1]

Piracy was not easy to suppress, because the distinction between pirate and merchant was often slight. In a large number of recorded instances the two callings were combined. Consequently, in some of the commercial treaties a clause had to be inserted to the effect that the owners of vessels were to deposit a sum of money before leaving the port as a guarantee of good behaviour. The amount was as high as twice the value of the ship and cargo. Yet another remedy against loss from piracy known as *letters of marque* was given to the merchants. These letters gave the right of reprisal to the injured party and allowed them to take the law into their own hands. But this remedy soon proved a graver danger than the disease. An extreme instance occurred when Emperor Fredrick

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[1] On the 21st August 1485, a twenty-four hours' battle was fought between a French pirate and the entire fleet of Flanders Galleys in which 400 Venetians were killed. The Captain of the pirates was a French officer in the service of the French king! It is strange to hear that no one was punished. "In fact, the deed was justified on the ground that Venice was under a Papal interdict and therefore outside the law." Sometimes, pirates boldly entered ports in search of prey. In 1495 some Frenchmen sailed up Southampton water and raided the Venetian galleys which were at anchor off the town, seizing, among others the commander of the fleet and the Venetian Consul in England.

III instigated some men on the Rhine to seize the goods of certain Milanese merchants bound for England, on the strength of a letter of marque granted by a former king of England to a German merchant. The German merchant was then no longer living, but he appears to have transferred the right to the German king.

Shipwrecked voyages received scant compassion in those days. Ships forced into port by storm were treated no better.[1] Besides, local trade rivalries occasionally flared up in European cities in inspired attacks directed against the residences and warehouses of foreign merchants. On the night of 30th April 1493, a London mob made an assault on the steel-yard and attacked foreigners. The Hansa, the biggest European trading league of those days, had to put up with similar difficulties in more than one European city, where they had trade establishments.

"As the 16th century progressed, religious strife also played its part in stirring up international animosity and in providing a pretext for evil-doing on the sea", says J. A. Williamson.[2] Though it was a general principle in the commerce of the Middle Ages in the interest of cheapness to encourage foreign merchants to bring their goods and establish their factories, when national rivalries arose this principle was either neglected or ignored. Such is the picture of European commercial practice at the turn of the century.

The development of heavy and regular traffic on the Indian Ocean was in no small measure the result of the stern measures which the Indian princes took against the pirates who formerly infested the coastal waters, especially in the vicinity of Konkan and Gujarat. When Marco Polo passed this way in the thirteenth century, these pirates were a great menace to all shipping. However, by the fifteenth century, sea-travel was very largely free from piratical molestation. Ships of all nations, China, Pegu, Malacca, the Golden Chersonese, Ormuz, Egypt, Mombasa and Mozambique came to Calicut regularly. According to Ludovico Varthema's estimate there were 15,000 foreign-trading Moslems in the city. We are further told that the king of Calicut did not exercise his right to the wrecks of ships which, according to an old custom, not unknown in Europe, used to be claimed by the rest of the princes of the littoral.

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[1] In January 1506, the Archduke Philip of Castile was overtaken by a storm and forced to put in at Weymouth. The king of England, Henry VII, immediately put the Archduke in his power and forced him to sign a monstrously one-sided commercial treaty which was deservedly decried, all over Europe, as *Maelus Intercursus.*

[2] Williamson, J. A., *Maritime Enterprise (1485—1558)*, Oxford University Press, London.

"The rapid rise of Calicut was due," as Krishna Iyer remarks in his book, *The Zamorins of Calicut*, "not so much to its geographical advantages, nor even to the coming of the Moors and the Chinese, as to the character and policy of the Zamorins, which induced them to flock to this port in such large numbers."[1]

Even as late as 1608, when Pyrard de Laval visited Calicut after a hundred years' exhausting war, he found it "the busiest and most full of traffic and commerce in the whole of India. It has merchants from all parts of the world, and of all nations and religions, by reason of the liberty and security accorded to them there; for the king permits the exercise of every religion and yet it is strictly forbidden to talk, dispute or quarrel on the subject, so that there never arises any contention on that score." This principle, Pyrard explains, was held as a "cardinal maxim by the Zamorin who sought to make his kingdom rich and of great intercourse".[2]

The picture of Calicut at the end of the sixteenth century given by travellers does not show any diminution of its prosperity despite a hundred years' war with Portugal. The trade that passed through Calicut was immense and there were fine mansions, mosques and churches, beautiful avenues of flowering trees, well laid out streets and spacious warehouses and workshops. The king's palace was enclosed in a large area a mile square surrounded by strong walls buttressed at intervals by strong timbers skilfully carved with figures and painted in bright lacquer. The houses of the nobles, lords and the merchants were built in the fashion of garden villas and set amidst large orchards planted with a variety of fruit and flower bearing trees. There were large tanks and innumerable wells to supply the population with plenty of water. Coconut groves and large banyan trees softened the rigours of Calicut's blazing sun. Pyrard speaks with a thrill of pleasure about the long avenue of flowering trees which led to the gates of the palace of the Zamorin. These trees called Arbor Triste shed their delicate white flowers every morning in such large numbers that the road was covered as it were by a fragrant carpet of blossoms. These trees have disappeared long since and nothing of that once beautiful avenue remains in the drab street of shops and houses which today boasts the name of Nadakkavu (avenue of trees) in Calicut.

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[1] *The Kerala Palama* has an interesting story illustrating the honesty and integrity of the Calicut kings.

[2] Pyrard de Laval, *The Voyage of François Pyrard of Laval*, Hakluyt Society, London, 1888.

Calicut was a large city spread along the coast. It had many stately mansions, wide avenues, large warehouses, temples, mosques and the palace of the Zamorin. There were large tanks which supplied fresh water to the people. The citizens of Calicut were courteous to strangers. Ibn Batuta has given an account of the hospitable treatment he got from the people of the city. Vasco da Gama, as we shall soon learn, received a greater welcome. Foreign merchants enjoyed rights and privileges which not even the most distinguished citizens of Calicut could hope to obtain from their sovereign. The only restrictions imposed upon the foreigners were prohibition of the killing of the cow and the eating of its flesh. The penalty for the violation of this rule was death. The foreigners settled in Calicut respected the laws of the king and the usages of the people.

There was security and order in Calicut. His Majesty's customs lay light as a feather on the proceeds. On articles that were not sold in the market at Calicut there was no levy. The sea was open to all who could sail, the port welcomed the ships of every nation. The king established large warehouses wherein the goods could be stored safe under a Nayar watch and ward paid from the public treasury.

It is necessary to give this account of Calicut and the conditions which prevailed there, so as to enable the reader to form a true estimate of the nature of Portuguese transgression which soon followed. It is also necessary to add a word here about the rivalries that existed in and outside Calicut, for without this, the behaviour of the neighbouring kings and the Moslem factions of Calicut might become unintelligible.

THREE

Pepper Politics

THE ARRIVAL of the Portuguese in Indian waters spread alarm among the foreign Moslems whose trade, established over centuries of enterprise, was now threatened with ruin. The monopoly of the pepper and spice-trade hitherto enjoyed by the Arabs was challenged by the Portuguese who, being the only European nation that knew the sea route to India, now sought to wrest that monopoly for themselves. The Portuguese were able seamen and possessed superiority of armament. Besides religious rancours as old as the Crusades would now be transferred from Europe to Asia, from Castile to Calicut and the Moslems feared for their trade and lives.

Vasco da Gama had already experienced the hostility of the Moslems both at Mozambique and Mombasa. This was but a feeble foretaste of that bitter commercial rivalry and sharp religious and racial antagonism that were soon to develop in eastern waters and involve the fates and fortunes of nations in a manner they least dreamed. Between Mombasa and Melinde, Vasco da Gama had overhauled an Arab *sambuk* and captured it.[1] By all standards it was an act of piracy. The following extract quoted from the *Journal of the First Voyage* of Vasco da Gama gives a brief description of the incident and the reader can judge for himself.

> 'At break of day (April 14) we saw two boats...and at once gave chase with the intention of capturing them for we wanted a pilot who would guide us where we wanted to go. At vesper time we came up with one of them and captured it, the other escaping towards the land. In the one we took, we found 17 men, besides gold and silver as well as a young woman who was the wife of an old Moor of distinction.'[2]

But Vasco da Gama might have had his justification, for the Portuguese had met with unfriendly treatment at the former port.

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[1] Correa, Gasper, *The Three Voyages of Vasco da Gama*, translated from the *Lendas Da India* of Gasper Correa by the Hon. Henry Stanley, Hakluyt Society, London, 1869.

[2] op.cit.

Along the coast, from Dabul to Cochin, wherever there were settlements of Moslem traders, they assiduously circulated exaggerated accounts of Portuguese piracy. Their object was to discourage the Hindu and Moslem kings of the coastal region from entering into mercantile relations with these formidable European rivals. The Portuguese Captain had, therefore, to invent a story to account for his presence in these waters to allay the fears that might be entertained by the people of Calicut. He gave out that his ships had been separated from many others by a storm and that he had come to seek them there. Davane, the Gujarati broker, was sent to the king. The audience was fruitful. His Majesty allowed the Portuguese to land their merchandise and commence trade. The king sent them presents of fruits and fowls, as a token of his goodwill—a customary courtesy to calling ships.

The foreign Moslems to whom these proceedings were distasteful tried to prevent the establishment of a Portuguese warehouse at Calicut. The *cadi* or Moslem priest of Calicut and Koja Kasim, the factor of the sea, made ceaseless attempts to prejudice the mind of the king against the Portuguese. To this end they bribed the king's officers with rich presents requesting them to represent to the king that the foreigners were not merchants but spies who have come with plans to conquer the country for their king. These efforts, however, were not successful, and they used their great influence in the market to spoil Portuguese trade. The Portuguese landed a small store of their merchandise and began to buy and sell. Correa lets us into the secret of the tricks of Portuguese trade. "They allowed themselves to be thought simple rather than wary in these transactions, accepting goods at more than double their value and giving excess weight on all they sold." This strange mercantile behaviour alarmed the foreign Moslems all the more. They represented to the king's *gazil* that the Portuguese were really robbers as they did not appear to possess even ordinary mercantile prudence and that they should be killed and their ships burnt.

The *gazil* did not dare to give the king these counsels, for we learn that the king, soon after, sent hostages to the ship to enable Vasco da Gama to visit his palace. The visitors received a warm welcome. An enormous crowd received them with every mark of hospitality. The procession set out preceded by many trumpets and sacbuts sounding all the way; and one of the Nayars carried a caliver which he fired off at intervals. There went in the procession at least 3,000 armed men and the multitude of spectators at the doors and windows and on the roofs were quite innumerable. The General was well pleased at the reception and said pleasantly to those of his company, "They little think in Portugal how honourably we are received here."[1]

They arrived at the palace. They had to pass through several courts before they came to the gate of the house where the king resided. Here, they were met by the Chief Brahmin (Talappanna Namputiri) who embraced the General and conducted him and his people into the great hall of audience, "surrounded with seats of timber raised in rows above one another like our theatres, the floor being covered by a carpet of green velvet and walls hung with silks of various colours". The Portuguese bear witness to the wealth and magnificence of the Court of the Zamorin, the abundance of gold and silver and the discipline of the men-at-arms.

> 'When the General entered the hall in which the king sat, he stopped and bowed down three times according to the custom of the country, lifting up his hands as one that praised God. The king immediately made signs for the General to draw near and commanded him to be seated on one of the seats.'[2]

After the official reception, the king took Vasco da Gama to another room and with the help of an interpreter interrogated him closely and seemed to be satisfied with the answers. Vasco da Gama sent the king some cheap presents which did credit neither to Don Manoel nor to the Zamorin. Brass basins, branches of corals and mirrors must have appeared cheap and common to the king whose court had accumulated the glowing treasures of art and craft from the emporia of the civilised world—Rome, Venice, Byzantium, Ormuz, the Golden Chersonese and far off Cathay.

Vasco da Gama delivered to the Zamorin a letter from King Manoel expressing his desire to establish a treaty of friendship and commerce with Calicut. The Zamorin ordered his officers not only to give them every assistance, but also to protect them from the jealousy of the foreign Moslems who were now enraged beyond all restraint by the king's hospitable reception of their rivals.

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[1] "The History of the Conquest of India" by Castanheda quoted in Kerr's *Collection of Voyages and Travels*, Vol. II, pp. 359 et seq.

[2] Correa, op.cit.

It is necessary here to quote Castanheda again to show how the Portuguese had no cause to complain against the king's officers who not only allowed them to trade peacefully but also gave them military protection.

> 'Our people were courteously received and entertained by the natives, and were even lodged in their houses occasionally. They bartered several things on shore...as freely and quietly as if they had been in Lisbon. Fishermen and others of the idolaters came off to the ships, selling fish, cocoanuts and poultry for biscuits and money, while others came with children merrily to see the ship.'

This continued for several weeks during which time the ship had always some of the natives on board.

The foreign Moslems, seeing the king well disposed to the foreigners represented to him that they were alarmed at the permission given to the "Portuguese robbers" to trade at Calicut. They pointed out that "this new friendship might break the old", and even threatened to leave Calicut to commercial ruin.[1]

This was a tactical blunder for the dynasty of the Zamorins never yielded to threats.

Partly as a result of the machinations of the foreign Moors and partly because the European goods offered in exchange found no ready acceptance[2] at Calicut where gold and silver, with which the Portuguese appear to have been ill provided, were in great demand, Vasco da Gama did not get a full lading. In a fit of impatience he wrote to the Zamorin to arrange to give him spices on barter. The king considered his request impolite. The Zamorin did not expect that the great navigator would treat him like a trader. When the king's officer of port demanded payment of customs amounting to 600 *Serasynes* (£223) which had fallen in arrears, Vasco da Gama was angry. He construed that the Nayar bodyguard which the *kotwal* had been at pains to provide for the safety of the foreigners, was a restraint imposed on his movements. Hostages were detained on both sides. However, when the king learnt that some of his officers, influenced by the foreign Moors had caused minor annoyance to the Portuguese, he relented and sent back the Portuguese factor and his clerk, but Vasco da Gama did not reciprocate. He left Calicut in a temper, vowing to take revenge, and carried away with him the hostages of Calicut. Vasco da Gama was in Calicut for seventy days and he set sail on the 4th November 1498.

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[1] *The Kerala Palama.*

[2] "They did not bring (spices etc.) as much as they could have done nor took no merchandise with them nor such as suited", in Alguns Documentos, 113, King's letter, Vasco da Gama's *First Voyage*.

Vasco da Gama had remained sufficiently long in Calicut to learn something about the politics and commerce of the country. The Zamorin's southern neighbour was the Raja of Cochin. The two were constantly at war more or less as a matter of dynastic duty. To the north lay the territories of the Raja of Kolathiri (called Cannanore in Portuguese annals) whom the Zamorin's superior military power had reduced to a state of torpor. Under each king were several chieftains in various degrees of insubordination. The rise of Calicut as a port of international commerce and the Zamorin's active encouragement of Arab trade in pepper and spices were important factors which gave him overwhelming power and resources. In his dynastic wars the Zamorin employed hired Arab soldiers.[1] He commanded the services of their ships and secured financial assistance when he needed it. The Moorish merchants were only too ready to render help in order to improve their position in the Calicut mart. The Zamorin's political power was thus supported by foreign aid with a tassel of commercial strings attached to it.

A view of the internal and foreign trade of Malabar of this period presents certain interesting particulars. A great part of the internal trade was carried on as elsewhere in India on the basis of a system of barter of goods and services according to established Hindu socio-economic custom. Indeed this must have covered a wide area of the daily needs of the population. Money was used in certain sectors and in certain other types of transaction but chiefly in foreign trade. Large inflow of foreign species must have produced somewhat of a disturbing influence on the social system of the Hindus, for the Hindu caste system had its customary occupational arrangements for the production of goods and barter arrangement for their local distribution. This disturbing influence of foreign money was countered by a more rigid application of the sanctions of caste and religion. This was the picture as far as the bulk of the people of the land was concerned.

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[1] The damascened swords brought into the country by Arab soldiers found their way into the armouries of Malabar soldiery. They are called *Urumis* in the war ballads of Malabar and indicate their origin in the land of the *Rumis* as the Byzantine Turks were called.

As regards the Moslem population we have to recognise two groups, local converts to Islam and the foreign Moslem settlers. A great part of the former belonged to the poorer classes of the local population. By putting themselves outside the Hindu fold, they were precluded from participation in their hereditary occupational arrangements of caste although they gained contractual freedom. But this gain was illusory as the normal avenues of productive activity in the entire area of Hindu society were closed to them. In course of time they were reduced to dependence on their Moslem progenitors for patronage and employment.

Their religious ties and association with foreign Moslems gave them a new field of service in the mercantile towns. They took to trade in a variety of subsidiary roles—broker, jobber, retailer. The poorest contented themselves by serving as porters and packers. We cannot assume that they had gained a satisfactory measure of contractual freedom. The economic powers of the Moslem merchant princes in close alliance with the administrative powers of the king's officers who were usually members of the higher Hindu castes reduced them to a status of perpetual dependence. Having placed themselves outside the scope of Hindu society, they had no longer any claims on it. They were left with a sense of being balked in their aspiration toward freedom and competence in spite of their change of faith. Friction was bound to arise. All that was needed was the presence of a third party, a foreign power, to exploit these differences to bring the sullen smoulder to a conflagration.

We need to keep in mind these factors as the picture of Indo-Portuguese relations unfolds in the following pages.

Vasco da Gama sailed north along the coast. At Cannanore the Raja of Kolathiri (Cannanore territory) gave him a great welcome, eager to establish friendship and commerce with the foreigners. He hoped to gain wealth and power with the help of these seamen in the same way as the Zamorin had acquired both with the assistance of the Moors. The astrologer-royal had prophesied great benefits to the state from Portuguese alliance. The king met Vasco da Gama on a wooden pier built for the occasion and exchanged rich gifts. The Raja signed a commercial treaty. The terms of the treaty were inscribed on a gold plate and presented to Vasco da Gama. The Portuguese received lading of pepper and spices. Pleased with these developments, Vasco da Gama weighed anchor and left Cannanore on the 20th November 1498.

The basis of the major political developments and military action which followed Vasco da Gama's arrival in Malabar was India's export trade in pepper. The Portuguese alliance with the Raja of Kolathiri was a shrewd move to take advantage of princely jealousies for the purpose of establishing a rival pepper mart at Cannanore. Within a few years Vasco da Gama's successor secured the friendship of the Raja of Cochin and established another factory where pepper was the chief commodity. This rivalry in the pepper trade grew bitter as the Portuguese designs to establish a pepper monopoly took shape. The political moves and countermoves which followed were indeed a long and keenly contested struggle for pepper.

Great was the national rejoicing in Portugal when the ships returned, and all dressed out with flags, put in at Belem. This memorable voyage, destined to have momentous results in Asia and Europe, was the culmination of a great unceasing quest begun heroically two centuries earlier and pushed forward, stage by stage, with unremitting enterprise by a succession of intrepid explorers. Rich rewards were given to all who had a part in this expedition. The value of the cargo was assessed at sixty times the expenses incurred on the voyage. The king conferred on Vasco da Gama the title of "Don", and 20,000 *crusados* and several other privileges.

The king accompanied by the queen went in solemn procession to Sao Domingo to render thanks to the Lord and listened to a grand sermon preached by Calcadilah on the subject of the discovery of India where, he said, honour and profit awaited adventurous Christians.

The news and the significance of the discovery of the Cape-route to India spread all over Europe. Portugal became important, for she alone knew the route by which untold wealth could be gained. Indeed, she took every precaution not only to keep that knowledge to herself, for every detail and circumstance of the voyage was long shrouded in secrecy, but also to secure for herself exclusive rights over the fruits of discovery by means of a Papal confirmation.

The king of Portugal added to his name the title of "Lord of the Conquest, Navigation and Commerce of Ethiopia, Arabia and India",—a title which was confirmed to him by a Bull of Alexander VI in 1502. The ecclesiastical world saw in this event opportunities for the conversion of large masses of heathens. It is significant that succeeding Portuguese expeditions conveyed to India clerics in ever-increasing numbers. According to a doctrine received in the Middle Ages the Popes had power to dispose of newly found lands. By an earlier Bull of Pope Alexander VI (4th May 1493) the countries lying to the west of an imaginary meredian line at the distance of three hundred and seventy leagues to the west of Cape Verde and the Azores were adjudged to be the rightful possession of the king of Spain, while those lands lying to the eastward of that great circle should belong to the king of Portugal. It was perhaps forgotten that these lands were not, in most cases, *res nullius*, but countries inhabited by civilised peoples with settled forms of governments and immemorial commerce.

The Bull placed an obligation upon these kings to propagate the Catholic religion in the new lands discovered "as a condition of being allowed to hold them on conquest with the Papal sanction and benediction". On the 28th August 1499, King Manoel wrote letters to the Pope and the Cardinal Protector praying for the Pope's confirmation of the old Bull. To the Cardinal Protector the king wrote:

> 'Whereas by Apostolical grants (Bull of Alexander VI dated Rome 1497, Kalendar of June) we enjoy very full the Sovereignty and dominion of all we have discovered, in such manner that little or nothing else seems needed, yet would it please us... that after you shall have handed our letters to the Holy Father, it may please you to obtain His Holiness's renewed approval and declaration in such a form as may best appear to you.'

A month earlier, the king had written to the king and queen of Castile conveying the official tidings of the discovery of India that it was his wish to convert the people of India to the Catholic faith, "so as to destroy the Moors of those parts".

> 'Moreover, we hope, with the help of God, that the great trade which enriches the Moors...through whose hands it passes without the intervention of other persons...shall in consequence of our regulation be diverted to the natives and ships of our own kingdom, so that henceforth all Christendom shall be able, in large measure, to provide itself with these spices and precious stones.'

The expedition took two long years to return to Belem. Vasco da Gama had lost his brother Paulo da Gama and half his crew in this long voyage. The king made ample compensation and rewarded him richly. An annuity of 300,000 *reis* was conferred on him and his descendants in perpetuity.

He was appointed Admiral of India and granted the privilege of sending annually by the Royal Vessel 200 *crusados* to India to be laid out in merchandise. After his second voyage to India to be narrated later the amount of annuity was increased to 400,000 *reis*. He had been promised the title "Conde" by the grateful king but this, we learn, was not conferred till 1518.[1]

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[1] Appendix 'A' 114, copy of letter from the *Torre de Tombo*. The Almiranto Amigo wrote a letter to the king threatening to leave Portugal, if the title 'Conde' was not conferred on him. The king wrote back: "We order you to remain in our kingdom up to the end of December of the present year (1518) and we hope by that time you will have seen the error you are about to commit." The king ordered the Duke of Burganca to vacate Vidigueira to placate the irascible sailor. But da Gama had to surrender his pension in exchange.

FOUR

A Tale of Two Cities

A GREAT part of the history of Malabar since the end of the reign of the last of the Perumals we can read only on the blood-smeared pages of the dynastic wars carried on with savage vigour as a matter of pious duty by the three princes of Cochin, Calicut and Kolathiri (Cannanore). In course of time Kolathiri appears to have gone on the defensive. Vexations along the northern frontier of his territory left him with no great zest for military adventures in the land of Calicut. The Zamorin continued to make incursions into Cochin territory, often on flippant pretexts. These adventures must have appeared generally satisfactory to all participants—the princes and their Nayar soldiery. They would have deemed their traditional occupation gone, if they had no opportunity for raid and plunder. Therefore, it was not surprising that the Portuguese seized the tempting opportunities that lay before them for establishing their power. Indeed earlier in the history of Malabar the Arabs had acted somewhat in the same manner selling their swords, ships and services to the Zamorin to raise him above the other kings of Malabar. There was however a difference. The Portuguese adopted crude and savage methods and they estranged even those of our countrymen who were not too unwilling to see the interests of our country exchanged for a mess of Portuguese pottage. Besides, the Portuguese were overcome by religious urges which would not permit them to leave the heathen alone. The increasing number of clerics they brought in their ships to India constituted a task force dedicated to the winning of native souls to the Faith. This was partly a political move. The king of Portugal could thereby win the support of the Pope and thus gain the solace of saving his pepper monopoly from violation by the rest of the Catholic nations of Europe.

Besides it was surmised, not unreasonably, that in those days of strong religious loyalties a local Christian population would prove handy and helpful to the temporal ambitions of a Christian power, and thereby counter, in some measure, the advantages enjoyed by their Arab rivals who had large numbers of local Moslem converts in and around their mercantile settlements. The rigours of Hindu caste rules brought a continuous stream of social refugees to the portals of any faith that was prepared to receive them as converts.

Logistics and geopolitics were the other reason. The Arabs enjoyed overwhelming advantages in the Indian trade. Their home ports were closer to India. The local chieftains were friendly. Their ties of trade were ancient. The Portuguese had to make a perilous voyage of eight months as against the monsoon run of a month which the Arabs took to make the Malabar coast. The Portuguese resolved wisely to secure footholds on the soil of India. A friendly hinterland became a further necessity. They soon found that the very circumstance of their participation in the Indian trade brought along with it political commitments which needed to be supported by military action.

The political dissensions and social divisions of India were an invitation to any foreign power for the temporal and religious conquest of the country. In our sad and shameful history it was these two factors which again and again betrayed our people to a foreign yoke.

The tale of the two cities, Calicut and Cochin, is the tale of that betrayal. It is all the more deplorable because it was unintentional. It was only the incredible folly of the Portuguese in their relations with the Indian people, that was responsible for their colonial decline.

Portuguese policy in the Indian Ocean aimed at a monopoly of the eastern trade by exercising a command over the sea routes so as to prohibit competitive navigation.

European rivalry was prevented by apostolic intervention. Indian and Arab trade could be eliminated easily, as the Portuguese possessed better weapons and ships. Because the Portuguese placed great reliance on these two factors, all that they required was a chain of fortresses along the coast to serve them both as bases and mercantile factories. Portuguese never formed any other than mercantile establishments in India, which they erected on the coasts without extending them into the interior. Naturally these footholds were precarious. They did not think of establishing colonies, of the working of mines or of the cares of agriculture. They carried on the commerce by means of fleet which the Government regularly despatched at fixed periods.

The king of Portugal offered his merchants the unattractive privilege of trading with India in their own ships, provided they paid a fourth of the profits to the king's treasury and undertook not to deal in spices which remained a crown monopoly. But the merchants of Lisbon were unenterprising and did not accept the offer. They also neglected the profitable traffic of the distribution of these eastern products through Europe, and it was the Dutch who engaged themselves in this gainful branch of industry.

The next expedition to Calicut which came in 1500 was commanded by Pedro Alvarez Cabral. The king instructed him to establish a treaty of commerce with the Zamorin and a force consisting of thirteen ships, ample armament and 1,200 men was despatched to overawe the Moors. Eight Franciscan friars and several Chaplains went with the expedition. Arriving at Calicut on the 30th August, Cabral had an audience with the new Zamorin.[1] They exchanged rich presents and concluded a treaty of friendship and commerce. The Portuguese were permitted to set up a factory, of which Ayres Correa, with seventy Europeans, was in charge.

> 'Our factory [says Castanheda] had tolerably good fortune in conducting its trade by the assistance of Cosabequin (Koya Pakki), and the natives, finding the factory favoured by the Zamorin, behaved so very civilly to our people that they could go about wherever they pleased, with as much freedom and safety as in Lisbon.'

This man, Koya Pakki, was the head of the native Moslem faction and appears, from all accounts, to have been at enmity with the foreign Moslems of Cairo and Ormuz and for good reasons. The role of the native Moslems used to be that of a middleman in the commercial transactions of Calicut. Being natives, they had affinities of race and tradition with the growers and the manufacturers of Malabar. But as they were not possessed of any considerable capital, they were always at the mercy of the rich foreign merchants from whom many of them were, no doubt, obliged to borrow. Being at a disadvantage, they did not get a fair deal in the enormous volume of business transacted annually at Calicut. These native Moslems were the channel through which foreign goods were distributed either on barter or for money among the people. The foreign Moslems demanded too high a price for these objects of luxury to leave any but the most meagre profits for those engaged in their distribution. Besides, we learn, the foreign Moors in their pride of race, wealth and culture, had conducted themselves arrogantly towards the native Moplas.

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[1] According to K. V. Krishna Iyer's list in *The Zamorins of Calicut*, the name of the Zamorin who reigned from 1500 to 1513 was Mana Vikrama, p. 336.

So, it was not strange that the native Moslems saw their opportunity in the arrival of the Portuguese and seized it. The Portuguese gave them a better price for the commodities than what the Cairo merchants were willing to give. If the Zamorin allowed the Europeans a factory, the Moplas would sell them the spices they needed. The Cairo merchants put up the prices by cornering the stock. Koya Pakki collected cargo for the Portuguese ships, but it came in small quantities. This act of a fellow Moslem was naturally resented by the Cairo merchants. At this time there took place another incident which further alarmed the foreign Moslems. The Zamorin who wanted to test the valour of the Europeans had asked Cabral to capture a Cochin ship that passed the port without paying the customary dues. Cabral seized the vessel; and the incident so pleased the king that he bestowed generous rewards on its captors.

The foreign Moslems were filled with fear at the growing influence of the Portuguese at the court, and they proceeded in a body to the palace to express their indignation at the encouragement given to these strangers. They reminded the king of their past services to the city and warned him that the house he had given to the Portuguese, they would convert into a fort to make war upon him. They warned him that if he did not listen to their advice, they would go to other ports and leave Calicut to commercial neglect. The Zamorin gave an evasive reply and allowed the Portuguese to stay. But Cabral was tactless and provoked an incident which was destined to have serious consequences on policy and events for over a hundred years.

In spite of the support of Koya Pakki, pepper and spices came to Cabral but in a slow trickle. Cabral was in a hurry to complete lading and return. He got cargo for only two ships. He wrote to the Zamorin requesting him to secure a cargo for the Portuguese. Hardly had His Majesty recovered from the effects of this piece of Portuguese impudence when news came that Cabral had seized an Arab vessel that was in the harbour. The Moslems ashore retaliated by attacking the Portuguese warehouse. "This was done by one of the two factions in Calicut, that of the foreign moors under Coja Kasim and the gentiles, in opposition to the Malabar moors (Moplas) under Koja Beguy (Pakki) who, after Ayres Correa had been killed, saved the lives of the sons of Ayres Correa whom he concealed in his harem. The cause of the outbreak had been various piratical acts of the Portuguese." Ayres Correa and fifty-three of his men were killed. This happened on the 16th December 1500. Three Franciscan friars who were in the factory were killed in the uprising. Koya Pakki's faction was weak and could not give any direct help to the Portuguese. However, he succeeded in saving Ayres Correa's children and a few Portuguese, whom he smuggled into his house for safety.

In addition to trade jealousies there was probably religious antagonism too behind this attack. Before Cabral set sail from Belem the king of Portugal had given him written instructions as to the religious policy he was to carry out in India. In the *Lendas Da India* of Gasper Correa there is a passage worth quoting:

> 'Before he (Admiral Cabral) attacked the Moors and idolators of those parts with the material and secular sword he was to allow the Priests and Monks to use their spiritual sword which was to declare to them the Gospel, with admonitions and requisitions on the part of the Roman Church asking them to abandon their idolatories, diabolical rites and customs, and to convert themselves to the faith of Christ....
>
> 'Should they be so contumacious as not to accept this Law of Faith and should they reject the law of peace which ought to be maintained among men for the conservation of the human kind, and should they forbid commerce and exchange which are the means by which peace is conciliated and obtained, in that case they should put them to fire and sword and carry on fierce war against them.'

The people of Calicut had obviously sufficient provocation.

Cabral demanded satisfaction, but got none. He seized ten of the Zamorin's vessels to pay for the merchandise left on the shore. He took the law into his own hands and destroyed several Moorish ships. Next he proceeded to bombard the city. The people of Calicut brought two pieces of cannon and made feeble reply, which did no harm to the Portuguese. The bombardment went on for two days. Many houses near the coast were destroyed and nearly six-hundred, both Nayars and Moslems, were killed. Thereafter, he paid a fearful visit to Pantalayini, another centre of Moslem trade where he killed several Moors. Learning that the Raja of Cochin was at enmity with the Zamorin, Cabral set sail for Cochin, destroying two Calicut ships on the way.

The Raja of Cochin, the dynastic enemy of the Zamorin, welcomed the Portuguese and entered into a treaty of friendship with them in return for the Portuguese promise to instal him as the overlord of all Malabar including the Zamorin's dominions. They established a factory and took lading for the ships. There were other princes too, who were jealous of the Zamorin. The Raja of Cannanore (Kolathiri) and the queen of Quilon invited Cabral to their ports.

On the 9th January 1501, while off Cochin, Cabral descried a vast armada of Calicut ships of all types bearing upon his fleet. The Zamorin had not remained idle. In less than three weeks he mustered all the ships he could and sent a fleet of eighty ships with 1,500 armed men aboard to punish the insolence of Cabral. The Raja of Cochin placed his resources at the disposal of the Portuguese, but Cabral disdained any assistance. For he had made up his mind to flee and thus save his cargo and his men.

When night fell he extinguished all his lights and stole away. In the hurry of his departure, he forgot to land the Cochin hostages or to take leave of his new ally. "Cabral," explains a Portuguese account, "was cheated of a victory over the Calicut fleet, because a sudden storm drove the Portuguese fleet far into the sea." This strange storm, however, appears to have left the Calicut fleet untouched. Storm or no storm, Cabral's fleet put in at Cannanore shortly after to take in lading and to make a treaty with the Raja of Cannanore, another king unfriendly to the Zamorin.

The voyage of Pedro Alvarez Cabral produced one decisive result. It made the Zamorin a sworn enemy of the Portuguese. Portuguese friendship with Cannanore and Cochin introduced a new pattern of political and commercial rivalry in Malabar. The echoes of Cabral's impolitic bombardment of Calicut, however, reverberated for over a hundred years along the coast and on the Indian Ocean.

The first act of Joao de Nova, who came next with a fleet of four ships in November 1501, was the plunder of a richly laden ship of Calicut standing off the port. After this, he proceeded to Cochin, where he took a lading of spices. Near Cannanore he took another ship of Calicut, which he looted and burnt. "On this vessel were found many very valuable jewels and amongst them, 1500 costly pearls, which were taken home to be presented to Don Manoel."[1] There were also found on board the vessels three silver astronomical navigating instruments which were quite unknown to the Portuguese astronomers and navigators. "The pilot of this vessel was retained in order that he might be instructed in the Portuguese language with a view to explaining the use of these instruments. The king of Calicut, on hearing the loss of this ship and of these valuable instruments, which he had caused to be imported from an island, Saponin, equipped a large fleet of 180 vessels to attack the Portuguese."[2] De Nova fired all his cannon to make an impression and succeeded in doing some damage to the Calicut ships. While the Calicut ships remained undecided, the Portuguese fleet manoeuvred[3] to slip past and make its way to the high seas and safety.

Cochin had suffered so long and so heavily at the hands of the Zamorin that the arrival of a new power on the scene gave the Raja of Cochin hopes of respite, perhaps even of reversing the balance, and may be of fulfilling the old dynastic dreams of the conquest of the whole of Malabar.

There were great possibilities in the new alliance, trade, sea power, and victory over an ancient and deadly enemy. The blood and tears shed over centuries by his subjects, the rape of their daughters, the burning of their homes and crops and the thousand other outrages committed by the Zamorin's Nayars and Moors shall soon be avenged.

The Raja of Cochin saw Cabral's thirteen ships bristling with cannon riding at anchor in the roads and he was pleased. Already his messengers had brought him news of Cabral's furious bombardment of Calicut and he was ready to forgive Cabral's capture of the Arab ship. The Arab ship ought to have taken better care of itself. "God has sent these ships to my shores", mused the Raja and His Majesty was right.

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[1] Danvers, F. C., *The Portuguese in India.*

[2] Ibid., part I, p. 76.

[3] Danvers mentions that the Zamorin sent an embassy to De Nova before he sailed away seeking his friendship and offering excuses for his previous conduct. This is hardly credible as it was the Zamorin who had received hurt and insult. Ibid., p. 76.

FIVE

Piracy

WHEN Don Vasco da Gama next came out at the end of 1502 with a fleet of twenty ships, he was well equipped for both trade and war. He had five lateen-rigged caravels formidably armed. He was in a position to assert Portuguese might over the Indian Ocean. "The ships carried 800 men-at-arms, many gentlemen of birth, besides captains. They also brought back with them the ambassadors of Cochin and Cannanore." It was decided that the largest of these ships were to return laden, and the rest, fourteen in number, were to be stationed in Cochin and Cannanore to lord it over the Indian seas. Vasco da Gama had also devised a scheme of self-support, for the expenses on this fleet were to be met out of the prizes it would make.

On his second voyage to India Don Vasco visited the East African coast to gain the friendship of the rulers and to establish trading posts. It was no wonder that the Sheikh of Mozambique, seeing the fleet's cannon trained on his city and palace, found himself in a temporary mood of repentance and made amends for his former conduct to Don Vasco. A trading post was established at Sofala. He not only overawed the king of Quiloão into allegiance to the king of Portugal, but also performed an act of knightly virtue by carrying away a number of very beautiful Quiloãn women "to save them from the jealousy and the illtreatment" of the Moors. At Melinde he renewed and confirmed his friendship with the king by a fresh exchange of gifts. Having thus secured his line of communication, Don Vasco entered Indian waters and committed a crime of unparalleled barbarity.

Off Dabul, the vessels assumed a war-like aspect, mounted their artillery and ran along the coast. Don Vasco claimed for the king of Portugal the suzerainty of the sea. "This was first formally notified to the king of Bhatkal, a tenant of the king of Vijayanagar. No ship, Moorish or Indian, could ply without the permission of the Portuguese. They were forbidden to bring Turks, or trade in pepper. Besides, no ship should go to Calicut."[1] A system of passes or *cartaz* was put into force soon after and every native ship which put out to sea had to take out a pass in order to escape being set upon by the Portuguese whose squadron patrolled the coast, based on Cannanore and Cochin. The Portuguese were determined to ruin the immemorial sea trade of India by brute force and not by fair commercial competition. Till their arrival, the seas had been free for all to navigate. Barroes[1] justifies this piracy—for it is little else—with elaborate casuistry:

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[1] Danvers, F. C., *The Portuguese in India* and also in W. Logan, *A Manual of Malabar*.

> '...as we were masters of its seas, whoever wished to navigate, whether gentile or Moor, in order to do so securely and peacefully, asked for a safe conduct from our captains out there, which they commonly called Cartaz, and if this infidel is found, not proceeding from places where we had fortresses which are in our friendship, with just title we may capture him as a fair prize of war. For although by common right the seas are common and open to all navigators...yet this law has force only in Europe among the Christian folk. But with respect to these moors and gentiles, who are outside the law of Christ Jesus—which is the true Law, since they are condemned in the principal part, which is the Soul, that part of them, which it animates, cannot be privileged with the benefits of our Laws.'

This intolerant proposition, wrong both in theology and international law, and superior artillery were the grounds on which the horrors soon to be practised on native shipping were justified.

Vasco da Gama must have found Bhatkal a fair harbour, "a great port from whence rice, iron and sugar were transported to all parts of India" and levied a tribute. It seems strange that the great king of Vijayanagar to whom the port belonged submitted to this affront. Coasting south, the fleet anchored in the Bay of Madayi near Mount Eli in Malabar.

Off Mount Eli, Vasco committed an act of piracy which, in cold cruelty, remains unequalled in the grim annals of buccaneering. Let us have the narrative in the very words of Correa:

> 'As the fleet was on its way to Cannanore, before reaching Mount Eli, a gust of wind struck it, which sprung the mainmast of the ship Leitoa Esmeralda. On account of this, da Gama

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[1] Barroes Joao De, *Da Asia*, Decad I Liv. IV, Cap 1.

> anchored in the bay of Madayi, because he saw there several Moorish ships in order to get a mast of them....While they were at this work, one day at dawn, there came a large ship of Calicut which came from Mekkah[1] with much wealth and fell in with the caravels which were on the watch out at sea. In this ship came the owner, who was the chief merchant and richest in Calicut. The ship was coming from the offing to make Mount Eli. The caravels went to it and made it come and anchor close to the Captain Major, who on learning that it was from Calicut, ordered the men to go and pillage it.'

There were over 400 pilgrims on board, including women and children. The owner who was the brother of the factor of the sea at Calicut was one of the passengers. The wealth carried in the ship would have sufficed to ransom every Christian slave in the kingdom of Fez and even then leave a handsome balance. The passengers offered all this wealth to save their lives. Javar Beg, the ambassador of the Sultan of Egypt, was on board on his way to negotiate a treaty with the Zamorin. To save his life and those of the passengers, he promised Vasco da Gama a free lading of spices and pepper for all his ships. "Sir, you gain nothing by ordering us to be killed", he pleaded with Vasco da Gama. "Command that we be put in irons and carry us to Calicut. If there, we do not load your ships with pepper and spices without anything for them, then you may order us to be burned....Consider that in war, they pardon those who surrender, and we do not fight. Do you put in practice the virtue of knighthood."[2]

Vasco da Gama was neither touched by the appeal to knighthood nor by the piteous entreaties of the fifty women and children who were in the ship. He ordered that all weapons should be surrendered. After this was done, he plundered the ship of all its spices and treasure, which he transferred to his fleet. Afterwards he dismantled the Moorish vessel, and confining its passengers under the hatches, set fire to it.

"The Mohamadens, however, extinguished the conflagration, collected the few arms that were left, prepared to sell their lives dearly, and beat off the boats sent to rekindle the flames." "Vasco da Gama," says Lopes, "looked on through his porthole and saw the women bringing up their gold and jewels and holding up their babies to beg for mercy." But there was no mercy. The Portuguese tried to board the vessel, but they could not. For eight days and nights[1] they fired into her with their bombards. As they were on the point of giving up the attack in despair, a hunch-backed traitor set the ship once more on fire. The author of *Calcoen* estimates the number of victims at 380 men besides women and children, and the loot taken amounted to 22,000 ducats in cash and goods. This was the first and the foulest of the dark deeds committed in Indian waters by Vasco da Gama.

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[1] In Portuguese records Mekkah refers to Arabia generally and not to the City.

[2] Jayne, *Vasco da Gama and his Successors*, p. 65.

At Calicut, Vasco da Gama ignoring a friendly message sent by the Zamorin, demanded reparations. He asked the king to banish all Moslems, which the king refused to do. On the 2nd November, the fleet drew up before Calicut and commenced a furious bombardment which was stopped only when it was pointed out to the Captain Major that the ships themselves were being damaged.

The people of Calicut had a few guns made of iron which they dragged out and fired, but the powder was weak and the range, because of their high trajectory, was inconsiderable. "Their shots came like bowls", comments Barroes in his *Da Asia*.

While Vasco da Gama remained off Calicut, there appeared a flotilla of twenty-four Calicut boats, all laden with rice. He seized these boats and their crew numbering 800.

> 'He ordered his men to cut off their hands, ears and noses. . . . This done, their feet were tied together, and in order to prevent them from untying the cords with their teeth, he ordered his men to strike them on their mouths with their staves and knock their teeth down their throats. They were then put on board, heaped one upon the top of the other, and covered with mats and dry leaves; the sails were then set for the shore and the vessels set on fire.'[2]

Next he proceeded to Cochin and by a treaty imposed on the

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[1] Whiteway, *The Rise of Portuguese Power in India*, pp. 91-2 and Jayne, *Vasco da Gama and his Successors*, p. 66. According to Osorio the fight lasted till the next day, though the whole fleet was engaged with this single vessel. It took the Portuguese eight days to set fire to the vessel.

[2] Danvers, F. C., *The Portuguese in India*, Vol. I, p. 85.

Raja, he secured a monopoly of the foreign trade of his country and the right to establish factories wherever he wished. Thereafter he loaded his vessels for the return voyage.

The Zamorin had hardly recovered from the horror of this foul deed when news came to him of the Madayi massacre. The foreign merchants and the Nayars went in a body to the palace and demanded that the Portuguese should be driven from land and sea. The Zamorin got ready a powerful fleet and commanded his Nayar levies to assemble at Calicut for a war on Cochin. He tried the channels of diplomacy to wean the Raja of Cochin from his disgraceful alliance with the Portuguese which made Cochin almost a dependency of Portugal. But the king of Cochin did not heed the words either of the Zamorin's ambassador or those of his own chieftains. As a last effort, the Zamorin sent the Chief Priest, a Brahmin of the highest repute in his court, the Namputiri of Talappanna, on a diplomatic mission to Vasco da Gama. Koya Pakki, the head of the Moslem faction friendly to the Portuguese, sent his nephew to Vasco da Gama in a fast boat to warn him that the Namputiri was coming to spy out the strength and secret of the Portuguese. Vasco da Gama was capable of great dissimulation. He received the king's messenger with a show of great courtesy. The Namputiri promised to bring about lasting friendship between the Zamorin and the Portuguese. Vasco showed great interest and appeared pleased at these proposals and the Zamorin's Chief Priest felt gratified at the success of his mission. All at once Vasco da Gama threw off the mask. He had the Chief Priest secured to the mast and tortured with hot embers to make him confess that he was a spy. The screaming Brahmin was in a state to confess anything that was required of him, even to swear that he was Pope Alexander IV if that was what was wanted. Here was a self-confessed spy. Vasco da Gama invented a punishment which suited the crime. He caused the priest's lips and ears to be cut off and after sewing a pair of dog's ears to his head, he sent him back to the Zamorin as a warning and an insult.

The Calicut citizens who were clamouring for the blood of the Portuguese were further incensed when the insult to the king's priest was made known. The merchants of Cairo promised to place all their resources at the disposal of the Zamorin. It was to be bitter war against the Portuguese and their Indian allies. Before the vast crowd of Hindus and Moslems, the Zamorin, commanding their silence, took a solemn oath that he would "expend his whole kingdom, if necessary, to drive away the foreigners".

In the meanwhile Vincent Sodre, the captain of a patrolling squadron of Vasco's fleet, had paid a visit to Kolathiri where he got a welcome opportunity of ingratiating himself with the Raja. The Raja of Kolathiri was at that time smarting under an insult at the hands of an impudent merchant of Cairo named Coja Mohammad who not only refused to pay the port dues but spoke insultingly of the king and the queen mother when his customs were demanded by the officers. When Vincent Sodre learnt of the incident, he overhauled Coja Mohammad's vessel and collected the port dues. The rich merchant was tied to a post and whipped. These proceedings so delighted the Raja that he gave the Portuguese the right to trade and establish a warehouse at his port. Besides, the king began the custom of giving a gold *parda* daily to the Portuguese commandants at Cannanore for their table supplies.

In the meanwhile the Zamorin made diplomatic overture to win the Rajas of Cochin and Kolathiri, his southern and northern neighbours to his side. He employed his priests who wielded great influence in the country. But these measures did not produce any favourable results and the Zamorin was left alone to carry on his war against the Portuguese. The merchants of Cairo did not trade in their ports and those princes had nothing to gain from them. Besides, the foreign merchants had conducted themselves insolently towards them. Secure in the support of the Zamorin, the foreign merchants had gone out of their way to offer insult to them.

The Raja of Cochin had stronger reasons not to unite himself with the ruler of Calicut. The Zamorins had invaded Cochin and forced its king to acknowledge them as the overlord. This act of naked aggression and the humiliating conditions the Zamorin had imposed upon Cochin still smarted in his mind. One of the conditions imposed upon the vanquished prince was that he should deny the Nazarene Christians all participation in trade and confer those rights to the Moslems of Calicut. The Raja of Cochin, constrained to obey, bided his time. With the Portuguese as his allies, he could yet turn the tables on the mighty *king of the hills and the waves.*[1] He had dreams of becoming the overlord of all-Kerala, if the Portuguese would help. Had not the Zamorin risen to suzerainty and greatness with the help of the foreign merchants and Arab soldiers?

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[1] The title of the king of Calicut.

While Vasco da Gama was still in Cochin, Koya Pakki, the leader of the native Moslem faction of Calicut, sent a message to him disclosing the elaborate naval preparations that were being made at Calicut. The Zamorin had assembled a large fleet of all odd vessels he could collect. Coja Kasim and Coja Amber commanded the fleet. Coja Amber who had recently arrived in Calicut from Mekka did not wish to risk his own vessels and had them richly freighted and sent away to the Maldives. When Vasco da Gama heard of this, he ordered the squadron under Vincent Sodre to sail against the fleet and engage it. Under cover of this engagement, Vasco sailed out for the open sea with the ten ships of heavy burthen, fully laden, and thus made good his escape.

The Calicut fleet came in two squadrons along the coast with a light land breeze. The first squadron was commanded by Coja Amber. There were twenty large ships and seventy fustas all sailing in single file. Vincent Sodre ordered the caravels to edge close inshore in a line. Running under all the sail they could carry, they fired all their guns. Sodre hung back with his ships.

Each of the caravels carried thirty men, four heavy guns below, six falconets above, two of which fired astern and ten swivel guns on the quarter deck and in the bows. The ships carried six guns below on the deck, two smaller ones on the poop, eight falconets above, and several swivel guns, whilst the smaller pieces, which fired forwards, were placed before the mast. In the first engagement the caravel brought down the mast of the Calicut flagship and soon after succeeded in sinking three vessels. The caravels moved with great speed and came upon the second squadron consisting of a hundred *Sambuks* commanded by Coja Kasim. The Moorish vessels were not so heavily armed as the Portuguese caravels and suffered great damage. The Calicut fleet attempted to disengage itself but the first squadron recovering from the effect of the bombardment returned to its rescue. The whole Calicut fleet was now in the fray. The fire power of the Portuguese decided the issue of the battle. The Calicut fleet was dispersed. A large number of Moors jumped overboard and swam to the shore. Vincent Sodre captured several vessels. In one of them was a vast treasure, a gold idol set with precious stones, and several pretty girls and children, slaves of the rich marine merchants. Vincent Sodre took these as a present to the queen, leaving the rest of the women and merchandise to his captains as their share of the booty.

After this victory, Vincent Sodre remained on the coast as Captain Major of the sea. All summer he cruised along the coast attacking and making prizes among the trading vessels of Arabia and India.

SIX

Pacheco's Defence of Cochin

THE ZAMORIN in a towering rage invaded Cochin at the head of 50,000 Nayars. The first engagement was fought at the fort of Vypeen in March 1503 where Prince Narayanan, the Cochin heir-apparent, had posted himself with 5,000 Nayars, the pick of his army, to guard the strategic pass. At the sight of the vast Calicut army many Cochin soldiers lost heart and deserted. Among them were two Milanese gunsmiths. The Zamorin who needed the services of gunsmiths welcomed them into his camp with great joy. Despite wholesale desertions the prince and his men bravely defended Vypeen until his positions were overrun and he was himself cut down. This circumstance changed the whole character of the dynastic war which became now a blood-feud to be avenged according to the old feudal code on the person of the Zamorin himself. Their main defence broken, the Cochin army fell back frittering its strength further in a series of delaying rear-guard action. The Calicut fleet which had orders to attack Cochin was still getting ready to sail, collecting all kinds of vessels, ships, boats and rafts. The Zamorin made his way forward slowly intending to time his arrival at Cochin with that of his fleet.

Portuguese historians say that the Calicut army consisted of 50,000 soldiers. The figure is perhaps an exaggeration of the actual strength of the army. With the closer approach of the Calicut forces the Raja of Cochin was greatly alarmed and sent a message to Vincent Sodrè beseeching his aid, but the Captain Major refused to help his ally, saying that his orders were to cruise near the Red Sea and intercept the Arabian ships trading thence with India. The Raja sent the Portuguese factor, Correa, to plead and to point out to Sodre that the chief ground for the commencement of hostilities was the Raja's refusal to surrender the Portuguese left under his care to the Zamorin. This appeal did not have any effect on Vincent Sodre, for he sailed away to the Red Sea to make rich prizes. He captured several ships, but his own ship was finally wrecked in a storm off the Curia Muria Islands and both Sodre and his brother were lost.

While the war between Cochin and Calicut was going on, Don Manoel sent another fleet to India. Two squadrons under the command of Alfonso de Albuquerque and his cousin, Francisco de Albuquerque, were ordered to proceed to India and bring merchandise. They were further instructed to build a fortress at Cochin to safeguard Portuguese interests. A third squadron commanded by Antonio de Saldanah had orders to proceed to the Red Sea to hinder Moorish shipping and to stop that trickle of Indian trade that might escape the vigilance of the Portuguese blockade. One of these ships had on board a soldier, Durate Pacheco, whose courage and leadership have hardly been rivalled in colonial history and to whose amazing energy and generalship the Portuguese owed their initial success in their Indian wars.

Fortunately for us the details of Pacheco's famous defence of Cochin have been preserved for us. The defence was spirited and conducted against odds which, as regards variety and magnitude, would have provided exhaustive examples for any text book on military and naval strategy. It is needless to go into details here.

The significant fact of the Cochin campaign that attracts our attention here, is the role of the Zamorin's navy of 280 consisting of a flotilla of vessels and 4,000 crew armed with 380 pieces of cannon, large and small. It was principally used as a supporting arm to help the land army in its coastal or riparian operations. Albuquerque's squadron effectively diminished its value and obliged it to withdraw.

We get some interesting facts relating to the naval side of this war. Calicut ships protected themselves against Portuguese cannon by covering their sides with bags filled with cotton. Some of the paroes were linked with chain and stationed at the river mouth to deny ingress to the Portuguese ships. Eight tall turrets raised on barges were set on fire and floated down the river towards the Portuguese ships in an attempt to set fire to their sails and tackle. Pacheco had a large number of great masts anchored well in front of the ships to prevent too close an approach of these floating incendiaries. Another fact also comes to light. The Zamorin had a very large number of war-paroes which came to him in large instalments from Calicut. In the first of these battles 160 paroes of Calicut were engaged. In the second phase of the war the Zamorin committed a fleet of 250 paroes and in the final stages the Calicut fleet consisted of 100 large ships, 110 paroes and seventy pinnaces. Portuguese gunnery made heavy inroad on this number.

Durate Pacheco defended Cochin valiantly and beat off attack after attack. The war dragged on for five months. Calicut lost 19,000 men together with a considerable number of ships.[1] The two princes, thereafter, concluded a treaty and the Zamorin withdrew.

The accounts we have of the progress and termination of this war are confused. We, however, learn that Albuquerque was in Calicut in the month of January 1504 to negotiate a treaty with the Zamorin. The terms were harsh but the Zamorin agreed to all the terms except to that which required him to deliver up the Milanese deserters. The Moors were required to give up their trade with Arabia and Egypt. The Zamorin's acceptance of the last condition angered the Moors. Many left the city and more threatened to leave. Perhaps the Zamorin had his reasons to assent to these terms. He had by now ample proof of the disparity between Arab vaunt and Arab performance. They had promised a steady flow of reinforcement from the Moslem countries, ships and sailors in abundance, but no instalment of help had actually come to Calicut. Why should Calicut bleed in a fratricidal war to enrich Cairo?

But the treaty was short-lived, for soon after the Portuguese committed an act of piracy by capturing a Calicut ship that was carrying pepper to the port of Cranganore. His remonstrance was treated with contempt and the Zamorin bided his time. In the meanwhile Saldanah had been conducting piracy on a large scale in the Indian Ocean. He made many prizes, but also made enemies in all the places he visited. Albuquerque left India on the 25th January 1504. Hardly had he set sail when the Zamorin resumed his hostile attention to Cochin.

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[1] The Portuguese always exaggerated the enemy losses.

SEVEN

Still They Come

ON THE 22nd April 1504, King Manoel sent Lopo Soarez with thirteen of the largest ships built in Portugal and 1,200 men as he found it necessary to increase the Portuguese strength in India. Lopo Soarez made an effort to rescue several Portuguese prisoners and the Milanese renegades, but as Calicut refused to surrender them, he satisfied himself with bombarding the city for two days and nights, ruining a part of the city and killing three hundred of its inhabitants. He led an attack on the naval port of Cranganore which belonged to Calicut and burnt the town and several vessels. Here he looted the houses of the Jews and the Moors, but spared the houses of the Christians. On his way back from Cochin he saw a large Moslem fleet off Pantalayini Kollam. The foreign Moslems, finding their interests no longer safe at Calicut, were preparing to leave the country. Soarez swooped on them, destroyed the fleet and slew a large number of the Moors in the battle that followed. This was a crushing blow not only to the Moors but also to the Zamorin. It meant the exodus of the adventurous people whose active commercial enterprise had helped to enrich the coffers of the king. It also meant the exodus of a vast amount of gold. It is said that Soarez captured seventeen vessels in this engagement, all freighted with goods and treasure, and killed 2,000 Moors who were getting ready to board the vessels after a final farewell to the country they were forced to leave. This happened in 1506.

Portuguese action against Moslem shipping in the Indian Ocean began to make itself felt in the marts of the Persian Gulf, the Red Sea and the trading ports along the East African coast. The arteries of commerce, which, as we have seen, conveyed eastern product through their many branches to Egypt, Asia Minor and Europe, now carried only a thin supply, and affected the prosperity of the several nations which were engaged in its distribution. As a result those principally affected combined to meet the Portuguese challenge. The Sultan of Cairo who was one of the chief victims of the diversion of the eastern trade, warned the Pope that he was getting ready a large army to destroy the holy places of the Christians in order to take a religious revenge for his secular losses, and he hoped that Papal authority would dissuade Don Manoel from undertaking further commercial enterprises in India. Venice, whose mercantile interests were linked with the trade of Alexandria, brought pressure to bear on the Pope. Accordingly the Pope made representations to Don Manoel. The king of Portugal now assumed the shining role of the Knight of Christianity and declared that his wars against the Moslems were principally fought for the establishment of the Christian faith in all heathen countries and that his success would extend the See of Rome over the entire world. Pleased with the religious zeal of Don Manoel, the Pope ceased his intervention. The Sultan commenced the construction of a fleet to war on "the Feringhees".

Don Manoel was bent on the complete overthrow of Moslem commerce with India and planned to capture Aden and Ormuz. The farthest port of Moslem trade in the Indian Ocean from which, with hazardous toil, the Moslems still got a freight of eastern spices was Malacca. Don Manoel wished to close that port to Moslem shipping. Portuguese mercantile policy now took a definite shape. The closure or seizure of all ports, both of origin and destination of the eastern cargo, and the systematic destruction of all the carriers were decided upon. To carry out this plan the Portuguese required large forces stationed in India; they needed ports on friendly soil and a governor in the East to be in control of affairs for a reasonably long term. The first governor who came to India was Don Francisco Almeida, a vigorous but irascible old man with a flowing beard. He left Lisbon on the 25th March 1505 with a fleet of twenty-two ships and 1,500 fighting men. On his passage to India he found that the piratical activities of Soarez, Saldanah, and Sodre had made enemies of the princes and people at every port. Almeida took war-like measures to restore amity, a proceeding in which he was assisted by the political factions of local Moslems. At Quiloa he drove out the usurper and restored the crown to Mohamed Accuomi, a friend of the Portuguese. At Mombasa a brisk and short engagement brought about the submission of the king. At Zofala, the Portuguese took advantage of the succession dispute between the sons of the last king and favoured prince Suleman against his brother. The news of these exploits reached India before his fleet hove in sight. At Honavar the reception he got was not to his liking. He expressed his resentment by setting fire to the town and the ships in the port. Here an ambitious Konkan pirate, Timoja, made amends to Almeida and offered his services to the Portuguese crown.[1] Almeida, thereafter, proceeded to Cannanore, where a minister of Narasimha Raya of Vijayanagar is said to have met him to propose an alliance of marriage between his master's daughter and the king of Portugal's son! The governor constructed forts in some of these ports and left garrisons for their defence. Finally he established his residence in Cochin.

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[1] It was this Timoja who prevailed on Albuquerque to attack Goa. He hoped to gain the governorship of Goa but did not get it. This is narrated later.

EIGHT

A Milanese Spy in Calicut

FROM THE very beginning of the Indo-Portuguese war, the Zamorin realised that his weakness lay in armament. The manufacture of cannon and powder of adequate explosive strength was one of the foremost tasks that engaged his attention. It was to the Cairo merchants that the Zamorin turned for help. We also learn that he sent his emissaries as far as Venice to secure gunsmiths.

Calicut was getting ready a great fleet to attack the Portuguese. The Zamorin secured the services of European gunsmiths and shipwrights on terms that would have tempted even kings. These preparations proceeded in the greatest secrecy. His plans were to destroy the Cannanore base of the Portuguese with one smashing blow, and later turn his attention to Cochin.

In the first great battle between Calicut and Cochin of which a brief account has been given already, two Milanese named John Maria and Peter Antony deserted from the Portuguese ranks and joined the Zamorin's forces. It was a stroke of good fortune to the Zamorin. They had come to India with a licence secured from the king of Portugal to buy precious stones. They knew how to manufacture gunpowder and cast cannon. The Zamorin was pleased with this happy chance, took the Milanese into his service and set them to manufacture cannon of different types. Calicut artisans were engaged to learn the craft. Soon, the Zamorin had not only enough artillery but he was in a position to supply guns to Malacca and Ceylon for use against the Portuguese. The Raja of Cannanore, we learn, secured twenty pieces from Calicut when he broke with the Portuguese and laid seige to Cannanore in 1507.

The Portuguese commanders of Cochin and Cannanore were keenly aware of the danger that the continued residence of the Milanese at Calicut would bring on them. They made several futile attempts to kill or kidnap them; on one occasion they were promised a pardon, but the Milanese were wary. It was about this time that a Milanese named Ludovico Varthema visited Malabar, and the Portuguese employed him either to bring the two gunsmiths out of Calicut or to devise means to kill them.

Arriving at Calicut Varthema disguised himself as a Moslem and gave out that he was a physician from Egypt. He had to adopt this disguise because the Portuguese were making great preparations at that time to attack Calicut by sea and the Zamorin's soldiers were on the look out for European spies. The Zamorin had information that a large fleet was getting ready at Cannanore presumably with the active cooperation of the Raja of Kolathiri. Two Persian merchants who arrived at Calicut for a lading of pepper brought news from Cannanore of twelve large and heavily armed Portuguese ships and a large number of boats which they had actually seen. Calicut was also busy with preparations to meet this naval threat. Patrol boats went out to watch and report while the Nayar soldiers guarded the beaches both day and night. Despite all this vigilance the Portuguese at Cannanore appear to have got all the information they needed from the native Moslem faction in Calicut.

Varthema was welcomed warmly by the Cairo merchants. Their diseases were mainly those of luxury and self-indulgence, and Varthema began his ministrations without delay. His first patient was a rich merchant of Cairo. He nearly caused the death of this man by his crude treatment. Varthema's narration of this incident is despicably callous and exultant. As a physician he made a poor start, but as a Portuguese spy his work was crowned with success. Let Varthema tell the story:

> '...They (the Milanese gunsmiths) told me that they were in great favour with the king of Calicut, yet they anxiously wished to get back to their native country but knew not how, as they had fled from the Portuguese and would not run the risk of falling into their hands, having made many pieces of great cannon and other ordnance for the king of Calicut and that now the Portuguese fleet would shortly be there.'

They did not expect pardon from the Portuguese Admiral of Cannanore.

> 'The kings and princes between Calicut and Cannanore who were friendly to the Portuguese would intercept them. They had made about 400 guns, great and small, and could never hope for pardon. While I remained in Calicut, I saw them give a mould to

the idolators by which they might cast brass cannon of sufficient bigness to receive a charge of 105 cataros or measures of powder. At this time also there was a Jew in Calicut who had built (for the Zamorin) a handsome brigantine in which were four large iron cannon, but providence, soon after, gave him his due reward and he was drowned, while bathing in the river.

'God knows how earnestly I endeavoured to persuade them never to make any more guns for the infidels in contempt of God and to the great detriment of our most holy faith.'

Varthema wished to go to Cannanore to lay his report before the Governor of the Portuguese garrison there, but the strict vigilance maintained by the coast guard at Calicut did not give him a chance. The two Persian merchants appear to have been shady characters, for we learn that they were planning to leave Calicut without paying the king's dues. Varthema made friends with them in the hope that he could effect his escape from Calicut in their company. The Persian merchants had business in Cannanore and had made their preparation to leave Calicut in stealth, an arrangement which suited Varthema's purpose admirably.

Varthema continued his stay in Calicut for some more days to learn all he could "respecting the preparations that were making by the king of Calicut and his people against the Portuguese in regard to the enemy artillery and everything relative to the war".

When he prepared to leave Calicut for Cannanore he secured a letter of accommodation to a Moslem merchant. On the 1st of December, when he was about to embark, four Nayars of the king's guard called out to the pilot and ordered him, in the king's name, to land. "When the Nairs understood who he was, they asked the Persians why they were carrying him along without the king's licence, because he knew Portuguese and might betray their secrets." Besides, the Persians had not paid the king's customs. Thus prevented, they were forced to abide awhile in Calicut. They made another attempt to escape. They walked some distance along the shore, and meeting a poor fisherman, they bribed him to take them to Cannanore by night.

After reaching Cannanore Varthema sought an opportunity to escape from his Persian friends for he was eager to place the information he possessed before the Governor of the Portuguese garrison. One day, escaping from the Moslem sector of the town, he made haste to tell Don Lorenzo de Almeida, the son of the Viceroy, the posture of affairs in Calicut. Lorenzo sent Varthema in all haste to Cochin to his father. Varthema succeeded in convincing the Viceroy that he was the most fitting instrument for carrying out the abduction of the Milanese renegades and he unfolded to the Viceroy his plan to that end. The Viceroy was pleased with it and he sent Varthema back to Cannanore with instruction to the governor to deliver "as much money as might suffice for the Christian spies at Calicut".

At Cannanore, Varthema secured the services of an idolator (Hindu) who, from poverty, had been forced to pawn himself to carry a letter to Calicut telling the Milanese that the Viceroy had granted their pardon and safe conduct and was further pleased to send them money for their journey. It is of special significance that Varthema wrote to them "to leave behind all their goods except gold and precious stones". At Calicut, the renegades had, in a moment of confidence, shown him their treasure of pearls and gems. "There was a diamond, of 35,000 crowns value, a rich pearl, 2,000 rubies, 60 bracelets and 1,500 gold coins."

Assured of the Viceroy's pardon, the Milanese made secret and hasty preparation to escape to Cannanore. A slave divulged the plan to the Zamorin. According to Varthema the same slave reported this to the *Cadi* (a Moslem priest). The Zamorin sent his officers to investigate while the *Cadi* despatched 200 men in chase.

John Maria and Peter Antony appear to have covered a great part of the distance before they were overtaken, set upon and killed by the *Cadi's* men. We cannot but suspect elements of treachery and double-crossing in the whole business, and Varthema's role cannot be described as anything other than disgustingly villainous. The unfortunate native wives of the two murdered Milanese were sold in slavery to the Portuguese soldiers at Cannanore where they lived in poverty and died miserably of some foul disease they contracted. It is not clear from Varthema's account how these women reached Cannanore where they were sold as slaves. This man's narrative conceals more than it reveals and his frequent declarations of patriotism and Christian loyalties can hardly deceive an intelligent reader. He belonged to that type of unconscionable adventurers Europe debouched on our soil in large numbers in its colonial history. The measure of their success is also the measure of our depravity.

Varthema was in Cannanore where the news of the murder of the Milanese came to him on the 4th March 1506, and that was the day on which the grand fleet of Calicut sailed out to attack the Portuguese at Cannanore.[1]

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[1] Particulars taken from *Voyages and Travels of Ludovico Varthema*, Tr. from Latin into English by Richard Eden.

NINE

The Battle of Cannanore

THE ZAMORIN had sent his ambassador to the Sultan of Cairo with a view to forming a naval axis to fight the Portuguese and defend their common interests. A combined naval attack was planned. The Egyptian ships were expected to reach India to join forces with the Calicut fleet, already assembled and awaiting the signal to put out to sea. It is not clear whether there was any substantial instalment of Turkish shipping sent out to Calicut, but the merchant ships brought a great number of Turkish sailors.

In the meanwhile, acting on the information given to him by Varthema at Cochin, Don Francisco de Almeida ordered his son, Don Lorenzo de Almeida, Governor of Cannanore settlement, to muster his ships and foil the Calicut fleet. Lorenzo got ready his fleet consisting of eleven sail and put out to sea. He had not sailed beyond Cannanore roads when he saw far on the horizon a vast forest of masts. Let Varthema take up the narrative:

> 'On the 4th of March 1506 the Calicut fleet set sail from many ports. It consisted of 208 vessels, of which 84 were ships of big size and the rest rowing vessels called paroa. This fleet was manned with large number of Moslems, richly dressed in purple silk and cotton also, with high pointed caps after their fashion. They had embroidered gloves on their hands. They had turkish bows, swords, lances and all kinds of guns made in our manner. When we saw their fleet proceeding in order and well appointed, it seemed from afar like a great wood, so numerous were the masts, yet were we in sure belief that we would prevail against the idolators and Saracens. Don Lorenzo made a speech which was charged with religious fervour. The picture of Christ was shown to the soldiers by the priests who pronounced forgiveness of their sins.'

Lorenzo went to reconnoitre their fleet with two foists, fired a few shots to test the strength of the enemy vessel and the enemy's fire power. No fight developed that day. Next day the enemy sailed towards Cannanore and sent a message saying that if they were permitted to pursue their voyage they would not attack. Lorenzo did not agree to this. "Then with great fury they assaulted all at once thinking to have forced their way through our fleet. Our admiral allowed them to approach right over against Cannanore when he intended to set upon them with all his force so that the Raja of Cannanore might be a witness of Christian valour."

> 'When the trumpeter of the Admiral sounded the charge as a signal of battle, the admiral immediately attacked two of the largest ships of the enemy, casting his grappling irons and chains that we might fight them hand to hand. The entire crew of 600 were killed. The admiral immediately grappled another ship, which had chained itself to one of the Christian foists. This was also sunk. In the meanwhile the Moslems had captured 12 foists and carried them away. But one of the port galleys fought bravely and took them. The battle went on from morning till night. In this battle Simon Martin and Joan Serano showed great courage.'

Varthema's ship was attacked by the Mohammedans who:

> 'having boarded our vessels constrained us to flee to the poop for safety. They had to be rescued. The enemy sent down four of our foists who were already engaged against them but our captain took several empty casks in which gun powder had been kept before and placed them in such a manner on the side of our brigantine that they seemed like large pieces of artillery, the men standing beside them with a fire-stick or lighted match, as if about to discharge them. The device put the enemy to such fear that they departed from us.'

Portuguese accounts describe this engagement as a complete rout of the Zamorin's fleet. In fact the Calicut fleet had two other objectives, the conquest of the Portuguese lair of Anjadiv which it accomplished and the harassment of Portuguese shipping. The bulk of the Calicut fleet remained intact having slipped past Cannanore and stationed its squadrons at strategic points near river mouths farther north along the coast. Lorenzo had yet to win his victories.

The admiral pursued them taking seven foists laden with merchandise and sank ten others by artillery. One of these contained elephants. Seeing a large ship at some distance the next day, they bore on her and killed the sailors who were swimming for their lives, "so that the sea was covered with their blood". Two hundred of them escaped on shore after swimming about twenty miles. Varthema estimates 3,000 slain in the battle. "They are expert swimmers and could dive and remain very long under water."

The king of Cannanore who saw the great victory from the top of a cliff did not live long to shower his favours on the Portuguese, for he died a few days afterwards. He was a great friend of the Portuguese. He was succeeded by his nephew who hated the Portuguese and was an ally of the Zamorin.

Within a few weeks after the death of the Raja of Cannanore, the new Raja declared war on the Portuguese, and there was good reason.

TEN

Cartaz

THE NEW Raja of Cannanore waited for a suitable opportunity to attack the Portuguese fort which dominated his port and hindered its normal trade. He was friendly to the Zamorin and appears to have had assurances of military assistance from Calicut. He did not have to wait long, for the Portuguese gave him an opportunity very soon.

One of the early measures the Portuguese had taken to hamper Indian trade and shipping was the imposition of a system of *cartaz* or passes signed by the Commandants of Cochin and Cannanore, without which no native vessels were allowed to ply. If found without these *cartaz* which could be procured only after considerable delay and vexation and on payment of a high fee and gratification, the vessels were set upon and confiscated to the crown of Portugal. Under cover of this permit the masters of Calicut ships carried on their trade, and sometimes ventured to visit ports other than those stipulated.

Zeinuddin's narrative, a bitter and odd mixture of religious rancour and trade jealousy, gives an account of the difficulties experienced by native shipping during this period of Portuguese usurpation of the seas and the manner in which the *cartaz* were operated.

> 'The Portuguese confiscated Muslim ships if they did not carry their passes and enslaved their passengers....As a consequence the foreigners began to gain control over the trade of the Muslims which dwindled into nothing. When the Portuguese set their heart on it, they took away the right of the Muslims to trade in the more profitable commodities. The most profitable items of merchandise became their monopoly. At first they prohibited trade in pepper and ginger. Later they prevented the Muslims from trading in the costlier spiceries. Besides they would not let Muslims sail to Arabia and the major ports of India. The Muslims were allowed to do business only in areca nuts, coconuts and textiles and to sail to the less important marts....'[1]

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[1] K. M. Moulvi's Malayalam translation, *Tohafut-ul-Mujahidin*, M.A.M. Press, Calicut, 1954, pp. 30 and 67.

Taking advantage of native ignorance of the Portuguese language unscrupulous captains sometimes issued *cartaz* in which the ship was recommended for plunder by the first Portuguese patrol caravel that it might fall in with. A Portuguese Captain, Gonzalo Vaz, did not respect the pass issued by Brito, Captain of Cannanore, to one of the Calicut ships and straightway plundered it. In order to conceal his crime he sank the vessel after drowning the crew whom he neatly sewed up in a sail and flung into the sea. Gonzalo had taken every precaution and indeed had tied a large number of shots to the sail to weight it down to the bottom of the sea. The sea yielded up the secret, for several dead bodies were washed up ashore. The Moslems of Cannanore recognised the body of the nephew of Mammali Marakkar, the merchant-prince of Cannanore, among the corpses and gathered together with loud outcry and laid their complaint before the king. The new king was moved by the wail of the wives and children of the victims. The Portuguese had usurped his trade, plundered his ships and slaughtered his sailors and now they were killing his subjects. The king declared war on the Portuguese and besieged them in Fort Angelo. The Portuguese were reduced to sore straits. The king's nephew, a friend of the Portuguese, gave the enemy timely information of the king's plans for attack and the Portuguese were thus able to hold on till relieved by a reinforcement of eleven ships which arrived on the 27th August 1507 under the command of Tristan da Cunha and peace was restored, Mammali Marakkar acting as the king's envoy. This happened during the Onam festival of the year 1507. The conclusion of this war saddened the Zamorin, for he had hoped to gain an adherent to his cause and had presented twenty-one pieces of cannon to the Raja of Cannanore. The Portuguese, we learn, deprived Vaz of his command—a poor punishment considering the enormity of his crime.

It should not be supposed that Indian and other Asian nations who were affected submitted themselves meekly to these impositions. Indian and Moorish vessels ran the blockade, sometimes in open clash with Portuguese patrol; at other times by surreptitious method. Ponnani, one of the important ports and naval dockyards of the Zamorin, proved particularly troublesome to the Portuguese. When the Moplas of Calicut under Koya Pakki who had been friendly to the Portuguese saw them in their true colours, they broke away from their former alliance and decided to fight them.

A Mopla, named Kutti Ali, of Calicut armed four ships and under orders from the Zamorin, provided shelter and escort to all non-Portuguese vessels in defiance of the Portuguese squadron on patrol outside the Ponnani bar. Tristan da Cunha came with an overwhelming force on Kutti Ali. Kutti Ali fought a splendid engagement. Lorenzo who was on the flagship was wounded. The Portuguese comforted themselves in some measure by burning the outskirts of the town and doing some minor injury to the shipping in the port.

It is about this time that we begin to hear of the famous Kunjali Marakkars. According to Mopla traditions the Marakkars were originally marine merchants of Cochin. When the Raja began to favour the Portuguese, the Marakkars found Cochin uncomfortable and their trade in grave danger. They decided to leave Cochin and settled in Ponnani, one of the ports belonging to the Zamorin. They were the leaders of Moslem resistance to the Portuguese. The Zamorin who had vainly counted on help from the foreign Moslem merchants of Calicut now took the Marakkars into his service and supported them with men and money to wage war against the Portuguese.

ELEVEN

The Battle of Chawl

DON LORENZO persuaded himself that he had won a major naval battle off Cannanore. He thought he had proved Portuguese valour most convincingly to the royal spectator who witnessed the engagement from the cliff top. In fact it was only a minor action in which only an inconsiderable part of the grand fleet of Calicut had taken part. The main fleet manoeuvred past Cannanore and sailed further north to Dabul to keep its tryst with the Egyptian and the Gujarati fleet. The plan that had been agreed upon was that the three powers should join forces for a series of attacks on Portuguese bases and shipping. These were to be destroyed piecemeal. The time-honoured Indian strategy, whether on land or sea, relied on massive attacks aimed at smothering the enemy by sheer weight and numbers. The Calicut Admiral somewhat unwisely refused to commit his fleet to any positive action against Lorenzo's small force of eleven ships in spite of the fact that the massive shipping under his command was adequate even according to orthodox oriental strategy. Obviously he planned to join forces with the Egyptian and the Gujarati fleet to make sure. The Egyptian Admiral Mir Hussain, however, took his own time to arrive. The fleet of the Sultan of Gujarat commanded by Malik Ayaz, the Governor of Diu, too, was similarly waiting for the arrival of the mighty Egyptian fleet to commence hostilities. His dependence on Egyptian naval strength was so abject that Malik Ayaz would not put out of his home port till he was sure of the Egyptian's arrival in Indian waters. As will be seen, the conduct of these two naval leaders was by no means heroic. Nor was the Egyptian Admiral's conduct in this alliance by any means valiant.

Don Lorenzo sailed with his fleet towards Chawl where he attacked and destroyed several Arab ships. Off Dabul, he descried the entire Calicut fleet, a thick forest of masts crowding the river mouth. Lorenzo's determination to fight the enemy was overruled by his Council of Captains who declared that the risk was too great. The fleet departed without firing a shot. Near the mouth of the Sastree river they did some damage to several vessels and the township. After this Lorenzo returned to Cochin and made his report to his father, the Viceroy.

The Viceroy flew into a passion and was implacable when he heard that his son had refused an engagement with the Calicut fleet at Dabul and severely reprimanded his son and deprived his timid counsellors of their captaincy. The son burned with a heroic shame. He waited for an opportunity to prove his valour, and that came to him with fatal swiftness.

Afterwards Lorenzo began a great hunt for several Calicut spice-ships which, according to reports from Cochin, were seen making for the Maldive Islands. Ignorance of the sea and contrary gales took Lorenzo off the course towards Ceylon where he fetched the port of Colombo. What followed the arrival of the Portuguese in the Happy Isle of Lanka (Ceylon) will be found narrated in a later chapter.

In the meantime the Zamorin had sent his ambassadors to Malik Ayaz, Governor of the Sultan of Cambay, who was also Lord of the Port of Diu. He asked the Sultan for his cooperation in his war against a common enemy. But Malik Ayaz consulted his interest and declared that he was not yet ready to join the Zamorin in the enterprise. He expected a powerful fleet from Egypt, which, however, had not yet made its appearance in Indian waters. When these negotiations came to the knowledge of the Viceroy, he sent his son, Lorenzo Almeida, once again with a squadron of eight ships to the north. He was joined by Gonzalo Vaz, the captain of a ship from Cannanore with whose conduct we are already acquainted.

The Calicut fleet continued to wait for Mir Hussain at Chawl. The arrival of Mir Hussain and his twelve large ships and 1,500 men was delayed. He voyaged leisurely, stopping here and there to pay off an old score and accumulate plunder. When he finally arrived and put in at the port he began tedious negotiations with Malik Ayaz, demanding a high price for his aid. Malik Ayaz preferred to sit on the fence and await developments. The Egyptian Admiral finally made bold to move towards Chawl.

The Egyptian fleet, in full sail, hove in sight when Lorenzo and his officers were ashore at Chawl and made straight for the port. The Portuguese rushed back to their ships and commenced a furious bombardment which had the desired effect of checking the Egyptians momentarily. Mir Hussian had already got into the harbour and his hopes were high, for he was certain that he could capture all the Portuguese vessels. He managed to bring his ships close to those of the Portuguese with a view to boarding them. The Portuguese fired all their guns into Mir Hussain's ships which lay jostling one another in the confines of the harbour. The battle was fought furiously till nightfall and both sides separated having suffered heavy damage.

Lorenzo was fighting against heavy odds and the longer he remained in the fray, the greater were the odds piling up against him. For there was a vast swarm of small ships belonging to Malik Ayaz on the horizon which was keeping itself aloof, awaiting a decisive moment to intervene. When the battle was renewed the next morning, the Portuguese made several attempts to grapple and board the Turkish vessels. In this attempt the Portuguese ships had success for they were able to board two of their opponents and put every man on board to the sword. By this time Malik Ayaz found himself carried into the fray by a strong westerly breeze. His flotilla of small ships went forward to extricate the Egyptian. Lorenzo saw this move and despatched two galleys and three caravels to deal with the situation. The battle raged furiously for yet another day and both sides, once again, separated at sunset having suffered serious scathe.

In sheer mass the fleet of the alliance was overwhelming and Lorenzo was now fighting throwing caution to the winds. His father's admonition and his own heroic nature refused a strategic withdrawal. Early next morning when the battle was joined, Malik Ayaz swarmed up with a shoal of small vessels causing obstruction more than damage. Lorenzo's flagship was the principal target of Turkish gunnery. Lorenzo's ship was caught on some stakes in the river-bed while manoeuvring and was in danger of sinking. The Portuguese fought with courage and determination, sinking batches of boats that came within the range of their guns. The Calicut ships which appear to have played somewhat of an independent role were also deep in the fray and continued to harass the Portuguese, suffering severe damage in the contest.

At this juncture a ball from an Indian ship broke Lorenzo's thigh. The brave leader fell, but he managed to prop himself against the main mast and encouraged his men until he was killed by another shot. The son of Don Francisco de Almeida made ample amends that morning and lay dead on the deck of his flagship covering himself with glory. The Portuguese suffered a defeat and withdrew the remnant of their fleet to Cochin. The stern father heard the sad news unmoved, but he swore a mighty oath that he would cruelly avenge the death of his brave son.

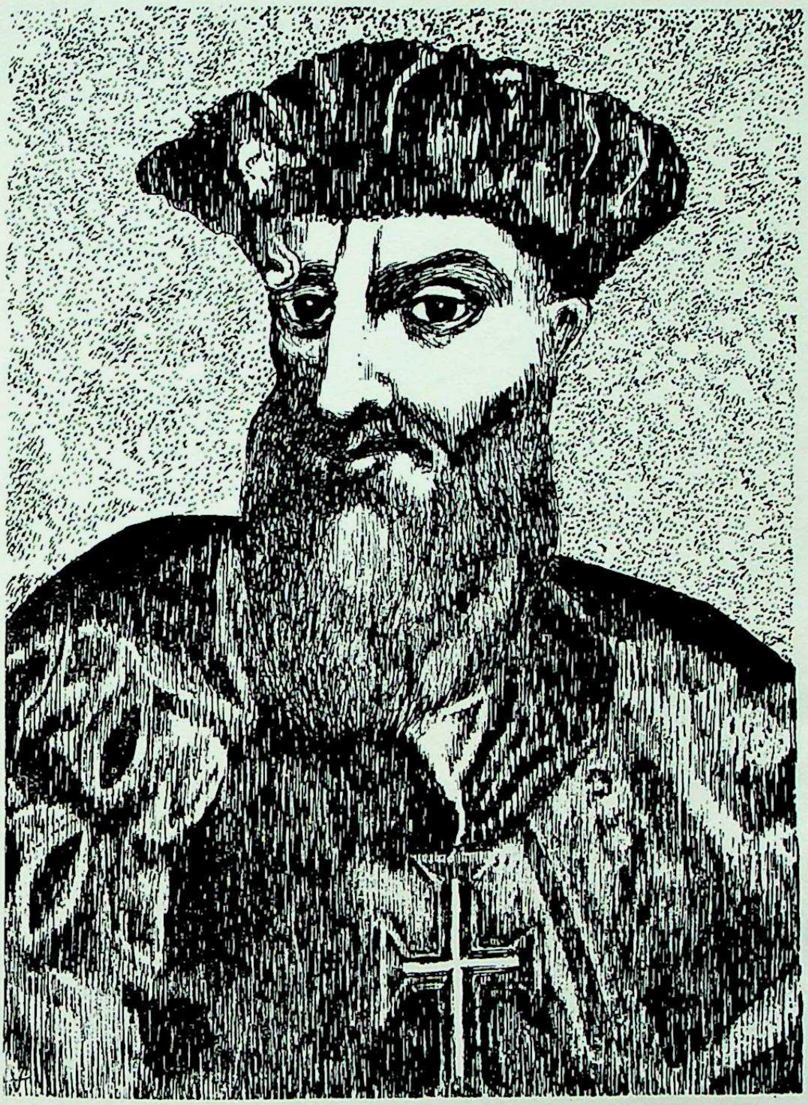
When reinforcement came from Portugal in 1508, Don Francisco de Almeida, the Viceroy, set out to avenge the death of his son. He sailed from Cannanore on the 12th November 1508 with a fleet of nineteen vessels and an army of 1,600 soldiers and marines of whom 403 were Indians. The fleet attacked Dabul, subject to the king of Deccan, and burnt the city. In January 1509, Almeida proceeded to Diu. Malik Ayaz was absent on a war on the Rajputs. There was a strong Indian and Egyptian fleet in the port estimated at 200 vessels by the Portuguese, well-equipped and ready to give battle.

On the 3rd February 1509, when the tide had risen sufficiently to float the ships over the bar, the Viceroy gave the signal and battle was joined between nine and ten, next morning. The fleet moved on in the appointed order, "amid the noise of loud shouts and the din of war like instruments on both sides". The vessels of Malik Ayaz opposed the entrance. A squadron commanded by Nuno attacked these vessels furiously.

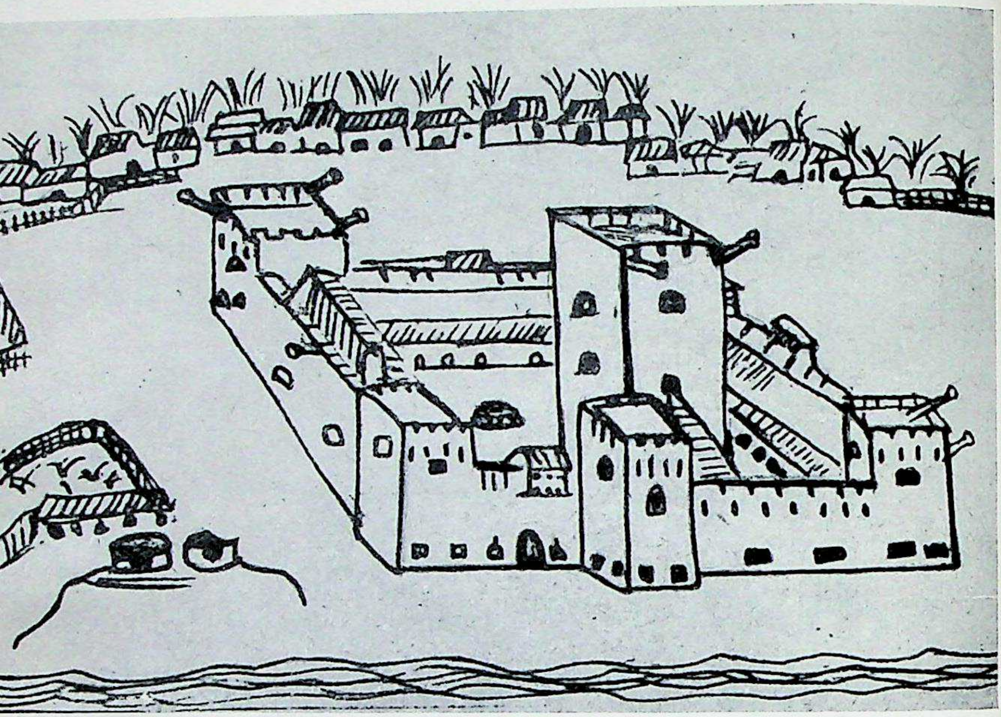
> 'The long artillery duel was only the prelude to more deadly work at close quarters. Favoured by a stern wind, the Portuguese ships bore rapidly down on the Egyptians until they were near enough for the Malabar long-bowmen stationed amidships and in the fighting tops to open fire. Few match locks had yet been imported from Europe. As the hostile vessels came to grips, each manoeuvred for an opportunity to ram her adversary and where these tactics failed grappling irons were flung and boarding parties, armed with half-pikes and axes leaped down from the bows and charged'.

Hussain's men fought courageously, though their leader had deserted them. When it became known that Hussain's plan had miscarried, the Calicut boat ventured forth in the desperate hope of effecting a diversion. They were manned by warrior Nayars who had donned their cast ornaments and dedicated themselves to death, but courage availed them nothing against artillery, and their fragile boats were sunk in batches. It was a decisive victory for the Portuguese. This victory would have brought honour to the Portuguese arms had not the conquered been treated with barbarous cruelty, owing to which, many persons very reasonably considered the subsequent unhappy end of Don Francisco de Almeida and other gentlemen as a just punishment for their crimes on this occasion.

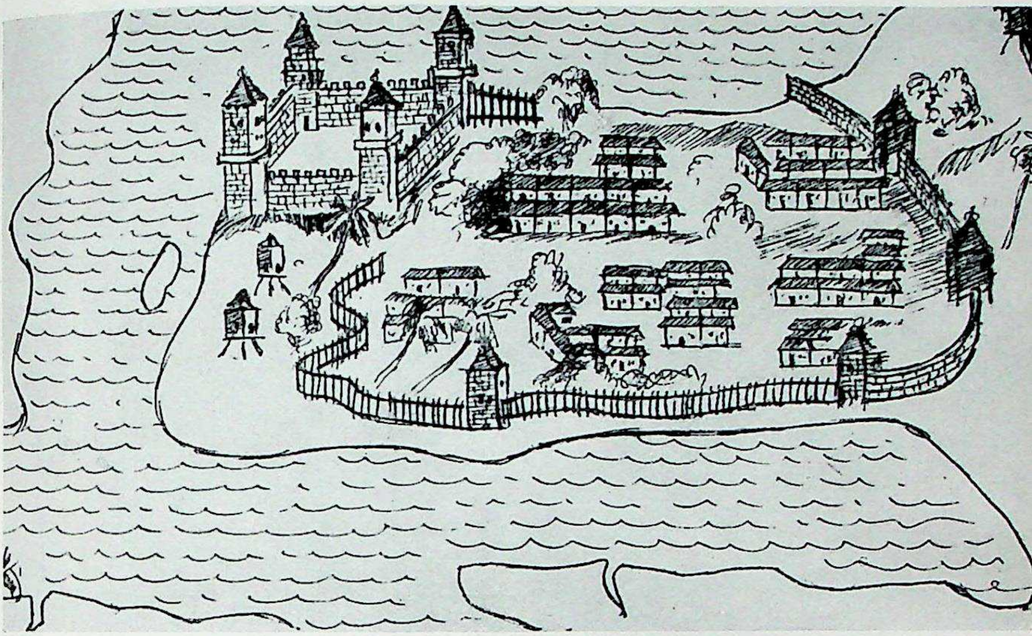
When Almeida sailed from Cochin in 1509 on his way back to Lisbon the Cochin astrologers prophesied his death on the way. Near the Saldana Bay he went ashore to procure a supply of water. He and his party were set upon by savages in a quarrel provoked by the Portuguese. Almeida and fifty of his men were killed.



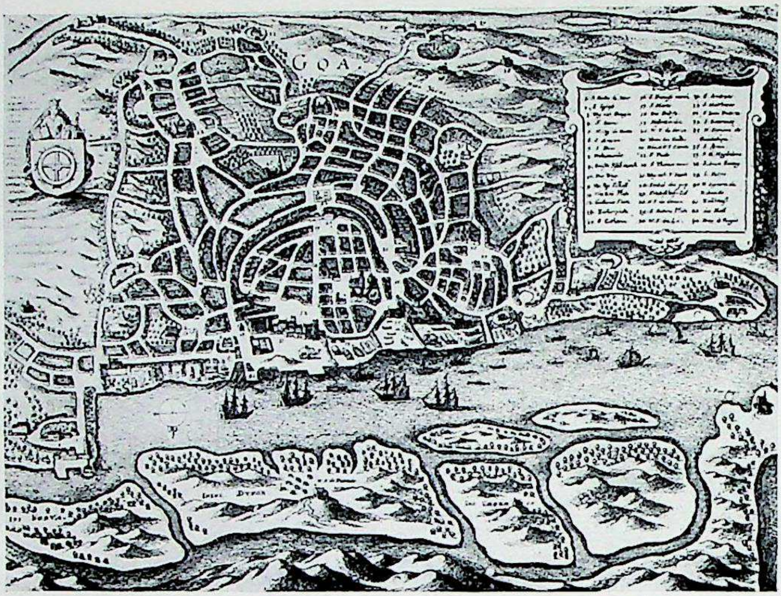
Vasco da Gama (From the Resende MSS., Sloane collection No. 197, British Museum)



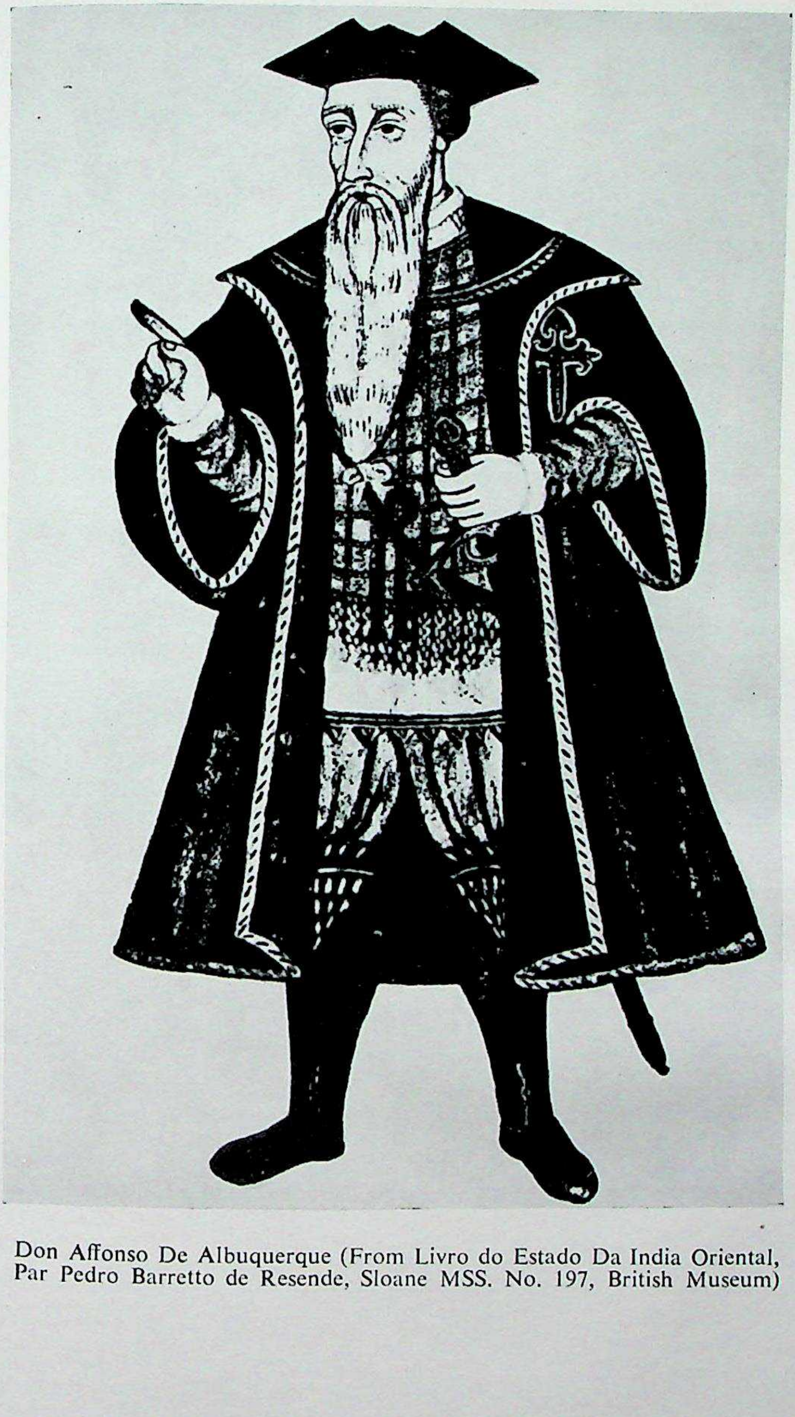
The Portuguese fort at Calicut (From an old print)



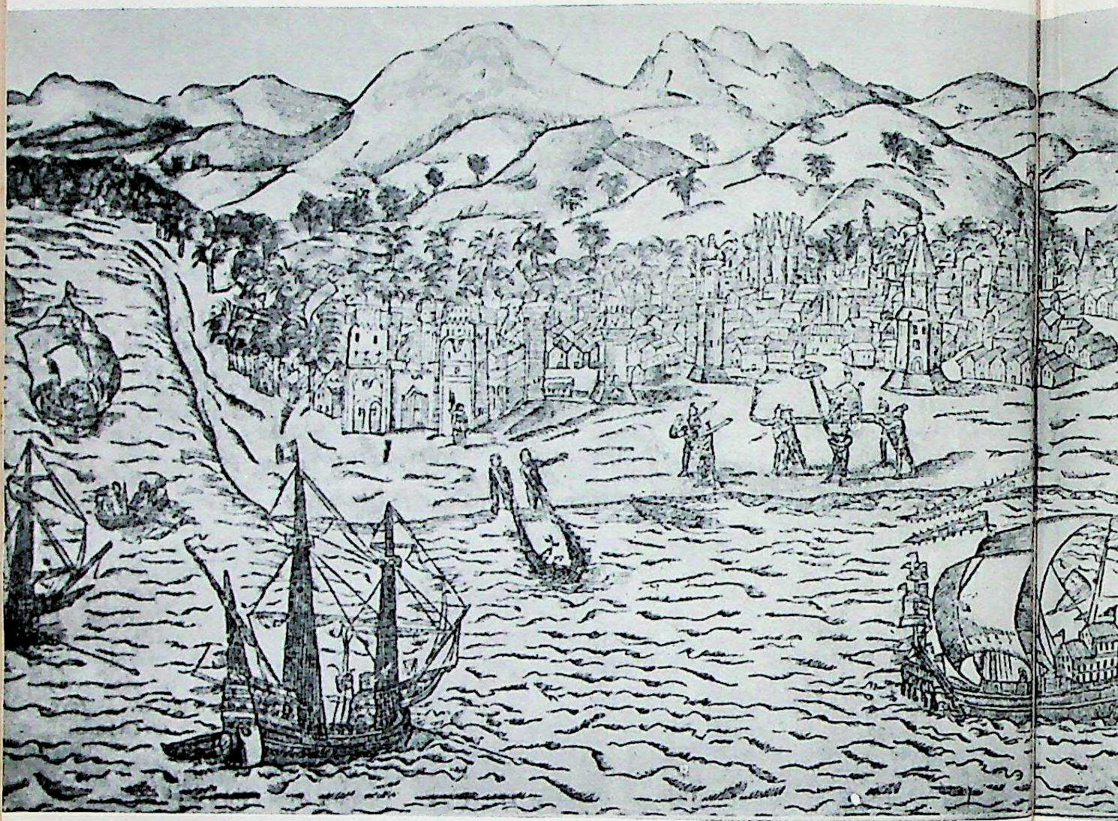
Kotta—the town and fort of the Kunjalis (Sketch made from Libro Do Estado Da India of P. Barretto de Resende, Sloane collection No. 197, British Museum)



Plan of the city of Goa (From an old German engraving)



Don Affonso De Albuquerque (From Livro do Estado Da India Oriental, Par Pedro Barretto de Resende, Sloane MSS. No. 197, British Museum)



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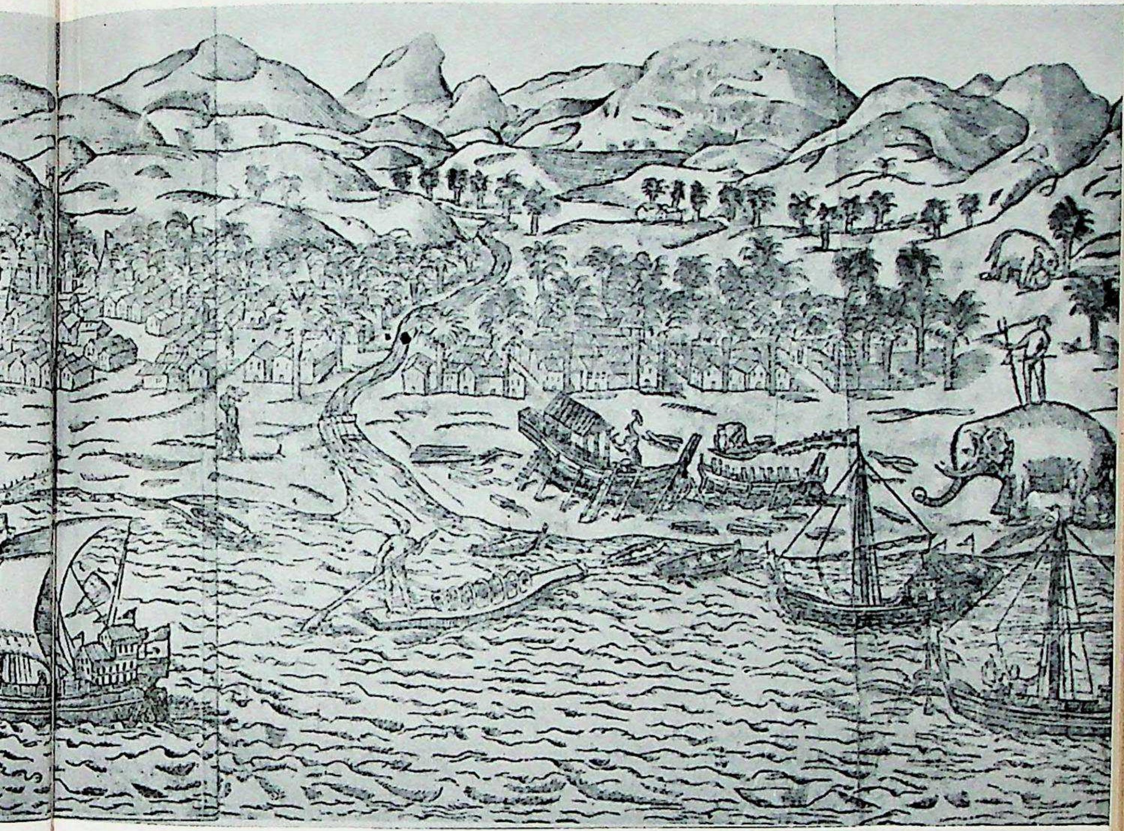

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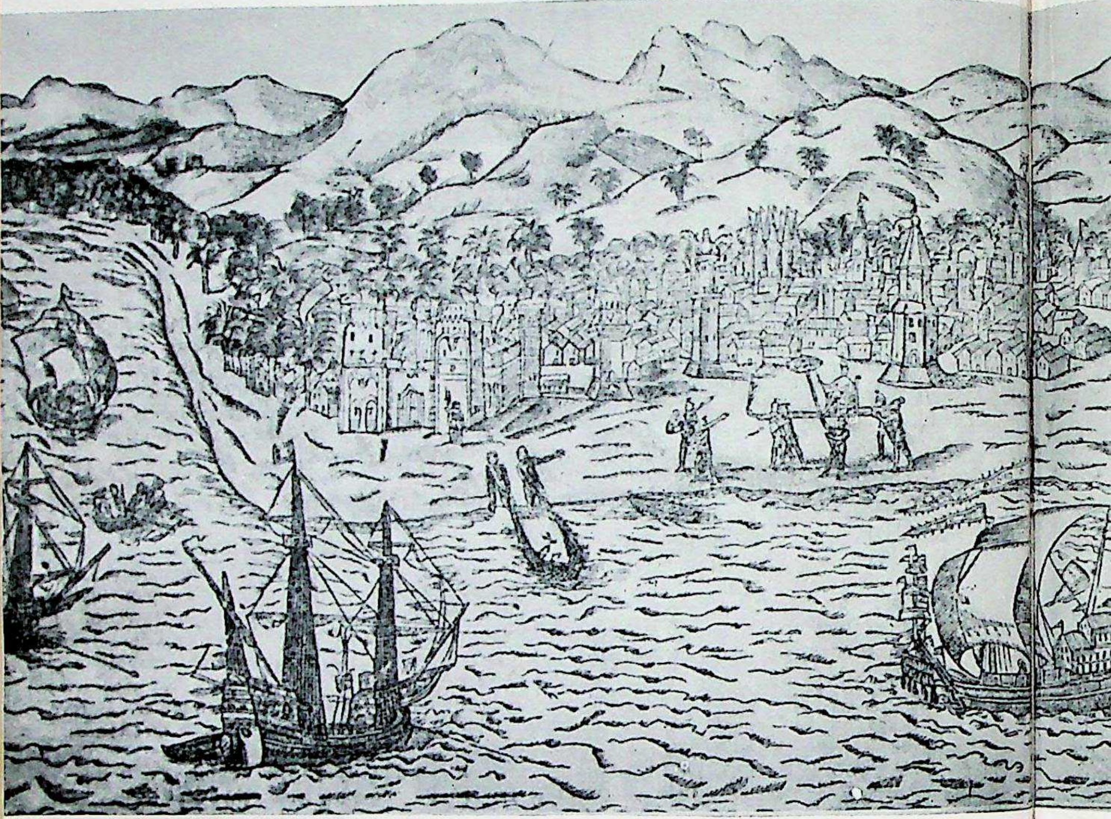

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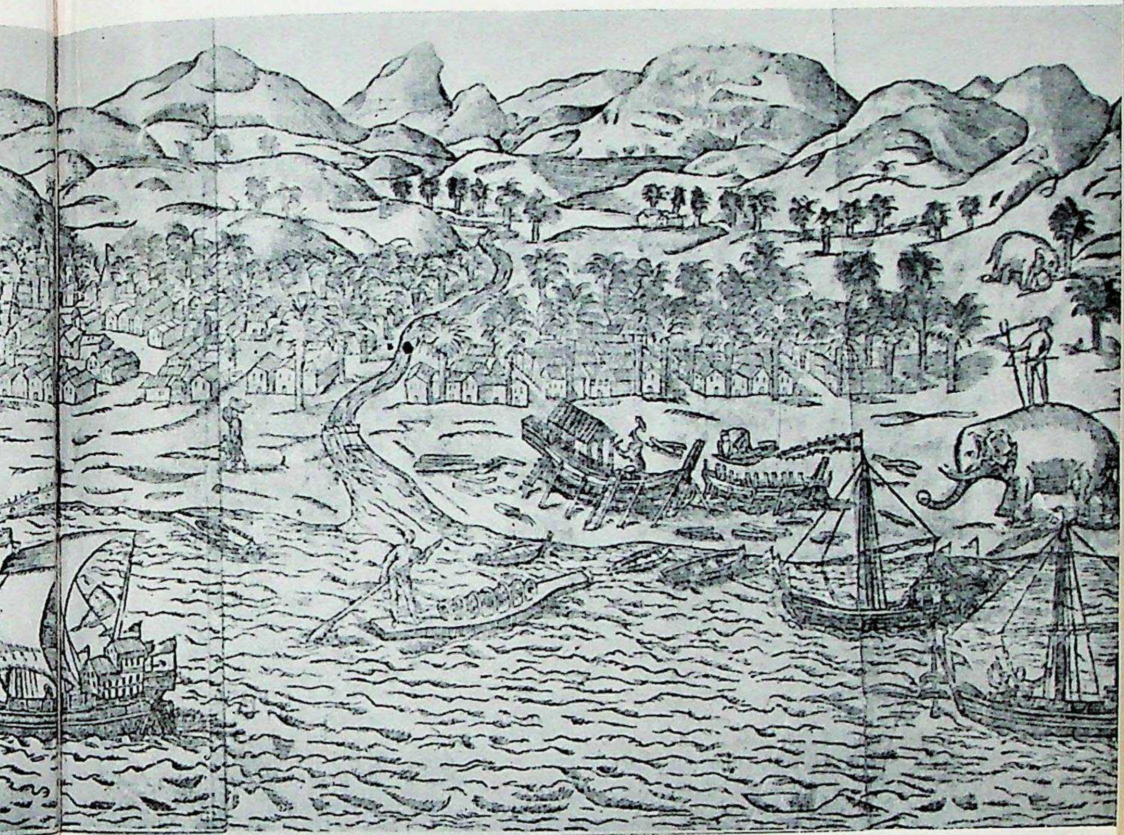

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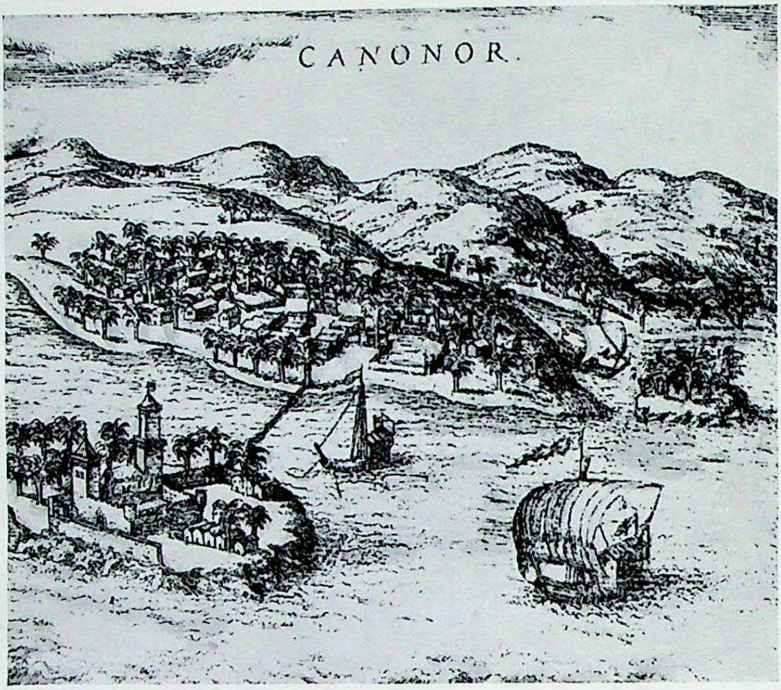
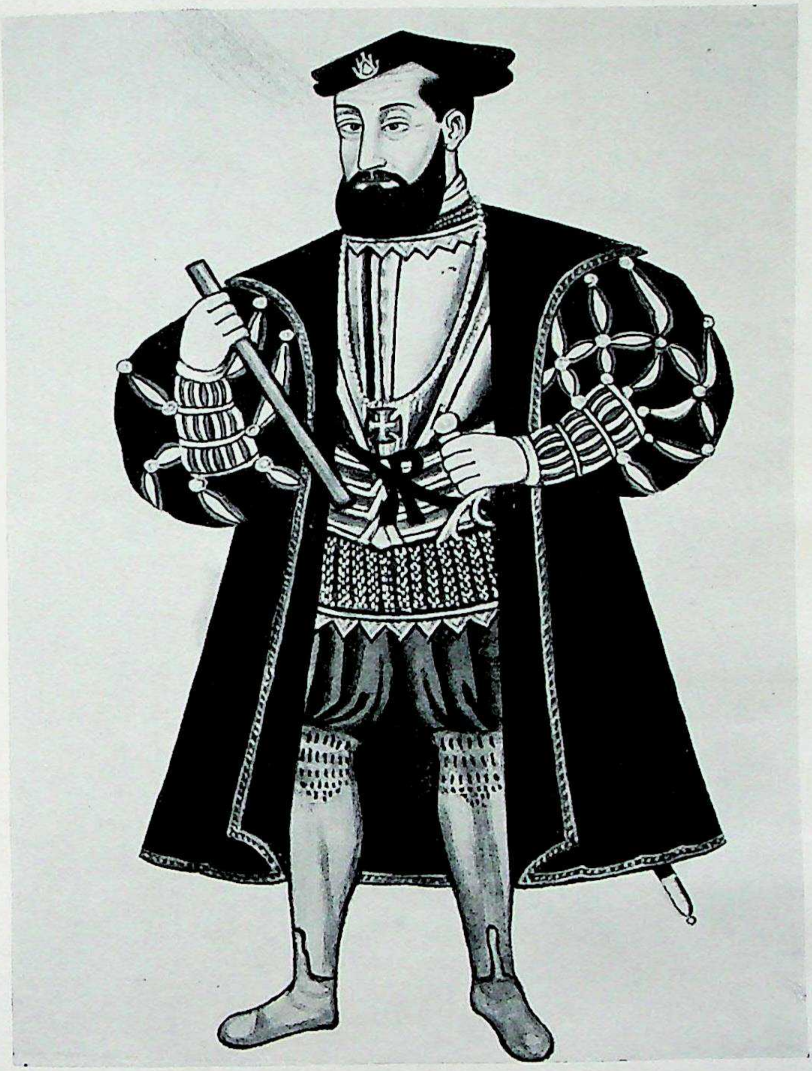
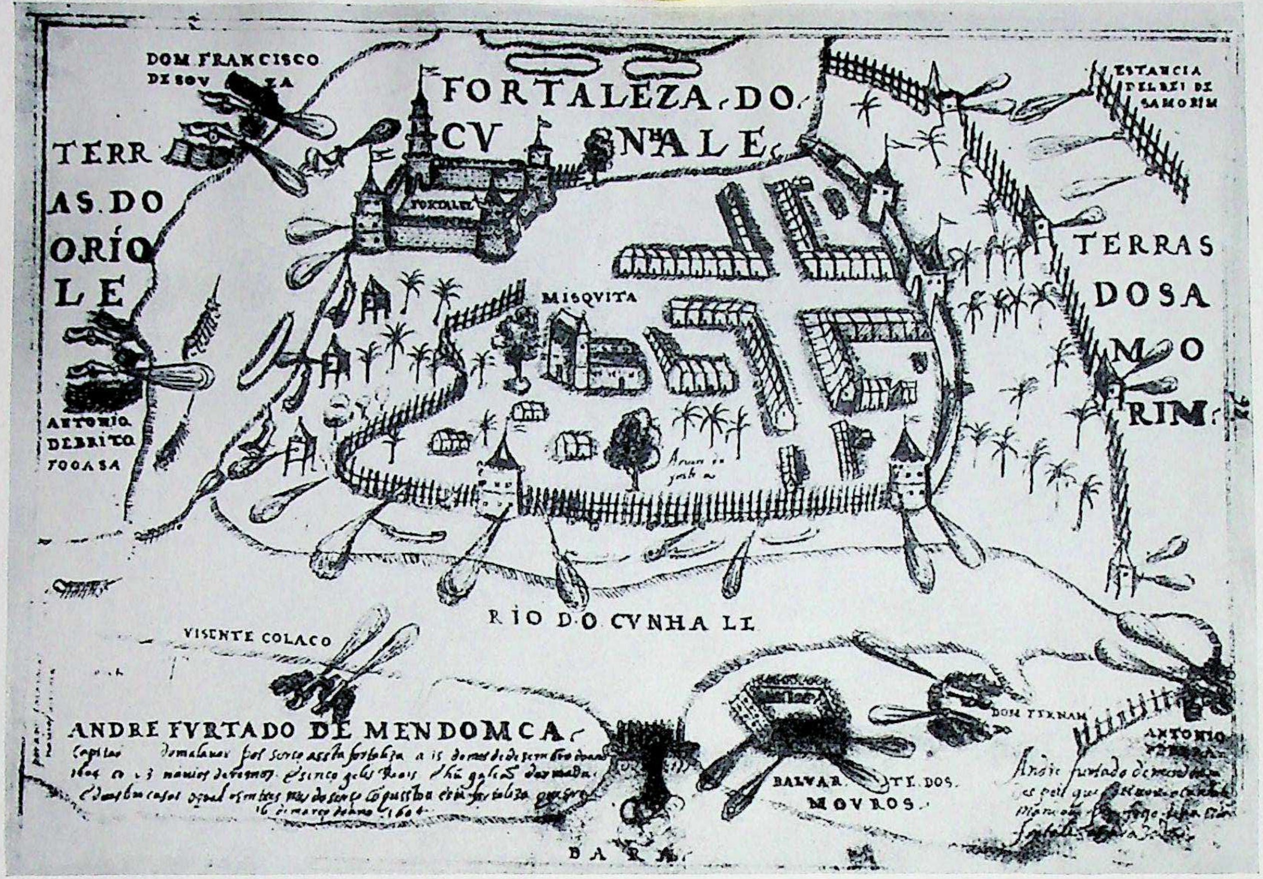


Town of Cannanore (From an old print)



Martin Afonso de Souza (From the Resende MSS., Sloane collection No. 197, British Museum)


DOM FRANCISCO DE SOUZA
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FORTALEZA
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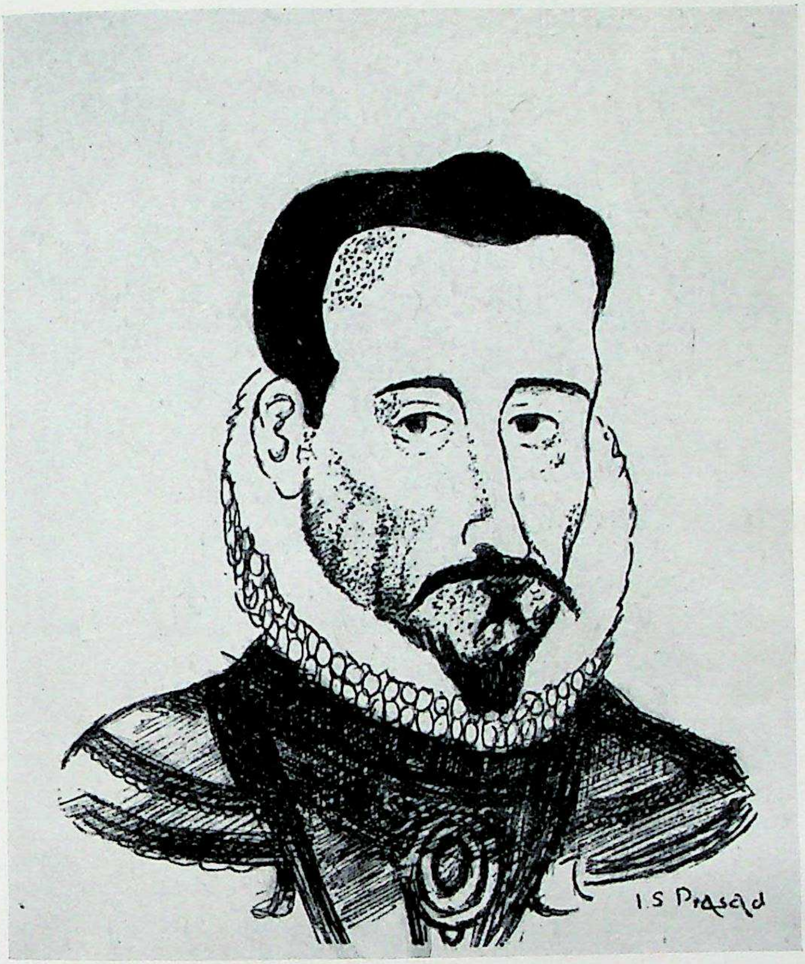
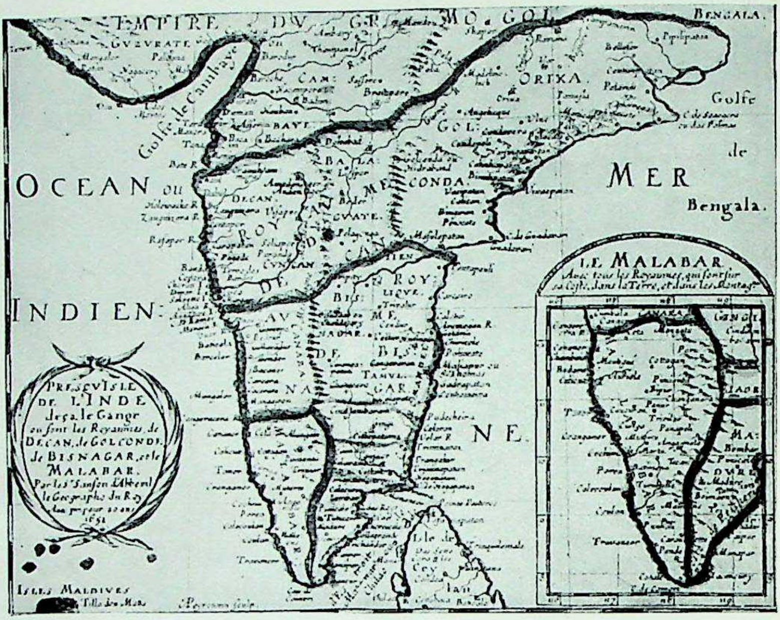
ANTONIO DEBRITO FOOASA
RIO DO CVNHALE
VISENTE COLACO
ANDRE FVRTADO DE MENDOMCA
DOM FERNANDO
ANTONIO PEREIRA
BALVAR TE DOS MOVROS
BARRA

Siege of the fort of the Cunhale (Kunjali) by Andre Furtado De Mendoca. The year 1604 in the inscription of the drawing is wrong, for the conquest took place in 1600. (From an original codex, unpublished and hitherto unknown, of Manuel Godinho de Eredita [sic—Edredia?] shortly to be published by Mr. Jorge Faro to whom our acknowledgments are due. By courtesy of Rev. J. Correia Afonso of Hera's Institute, St. Xaviers' College, Bombay)



Don Andre Furtado De Mendoca


EMPIRE DU GRAND MOGOL
BENGALA
GUZURATE
Golfe de Cambaye
ORIXA
Golfe de Bengala
OCEAN ou INDIEN
MER
DECAN
ROY DE GOLCONDA
ROY DE BISNAGAR
NARSINGUE
TANJAOR
Isle de Ceylan
LE MALABAR
Avec tous les Royaumes qui sont sur sa Coste, dans la Terre, et dans les Montagnes
PRESQU'ISLE DE L'INDE deça le Gange ou sont les Royaumes de DECAN, de GOLCONDE, de BISNAGAR, et le MALABAR. Par le Sr Sanson d'Abbeville Geographe du Roy 1651
ISLES MALDIVES

Map of India (From L'Asie par le Sieur Sanson d'Abbeville Geographe d'ordinaire du Roy, Paris, 1652)

TWELVE

Cutinho's Commandos

TRISTAN DA CUNHA who came to India just in time to relieve the Portuguese garrison of Cannanore in August 1507, was accompained by Alfonso de Albuquerque who was destined to play an important role in the establishment of Portuguese power in the East. He carried with him the order from the king to take over the Viceroyalty from Don Francisco de Almeida on the expiry of the latter's term of office. It is not relevant to this narrative to describe the disputes and mutual recriminations which arose from Almeida's refusal to part with the office and the conduct of the captains who took sides in the dispute. Albuquerque sailed to the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf to hinder the trade of the Moors. This expedition performed its mission successfully. The Moslem powers of the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf were at war among themselves. There were intrigues in the Persian court. Though Ormuz, the chief port of the Persians, was defended by a big and well-armed fleet, the Moslems did not offer a stubborn resistance. Albuquerque erected a fortress at Ormuz.

The quarrel which developed between Francisco de Almeida and Alfonso de Albuquerque came to an end only after the arrival of Marshal Cutinho. He reprimanded Almeida for his refusal to hand over charge to Albuquerque and installed Albuquerque in office much to the chagrin of those captains who had intrigued against him.

At a Council of Captains, the Marshal disclosed the secret instructions he carried from the king for the destruction of Calicut. Preparations were begun for an attack on the city. To the Raja of Cochin nothing could be more pleasing than the ruin of the rival city. In order to disguise the object of the expedition, Albuquerque gave out that the fleet was getting ready for an attack on Goa. Cochin sent out two spies to gain information as to the state of defences at Calicut. The Raja of Cochin set up two border chieftains to rebel against the Zamorin and succeeded in drawing a part of his army away from Calicut. The Portuguese army set out in the last week of December 1509 with a force of twenty ships and a large number of Cochin Catures, carrying in all 2,000 Portuguese.

Earlier, we have made the acquaintance of Koya Pakki, the leader of the local Moslem faction, who had been a friend of the Portuguese. This man was now repentant. The commercial advantage he hoped to gain by helping the Portuguese to drive out the foreign Moors did not come to him. Portuguese piracy did not distinguish friends or foes. Rumours of war-like preparation going on at Cochin had reached Calicut. The Council of Elders (Raksha Purushanmar) who carried on the Government in the absence of the Zamorin prevailed upon Koya Pakki to hasten to Cochin to ascertain the truth. He was asked to sue for peace with Albuquerque and prolong negotiations until the Zamorin returned with the army. Albuquerque dissembled and invited Koya Pakki to come on board his ship for answer. "When once the Moor was on board, he was kept under guard."[1] He was released only after the conclusion of the Calicut expedition.

On the 3rd January 1510, the fleet appeared before Calicut. There were but few troops in the city. The next day the enemy landed in two divisions, one led by the Marshal and the other by Albuquerque. The defenders of the stockades offered resistance, but the ship's guns forced them to retire to the city. Albuquerque recommended rest for the troops before proceeding further, but the old Marshal turned on him in rage and replied, "I know very well what this is that you want, that I am not to stir from here; but I mean to go on to the house of the Zamorin and destroy Calicut, before I take anything to eat and let him who will, go with me. Let him, who will not, stay behind." Albuquerque, unable to restrain the obstinate soldier, followed him, but he foresaw the dangers of this course and quickly made certain dispositions of troops which, as will be seen later, saved the Portuguese from total destruction.

The Palace of the Zamorin was far inland and the unfavourable terrain made the communication line between the beachhead and the advancing columns insecure. Albuquerque ordered his nephew, Don Antonio de Noronha, to stay near the jetty with his soldiers "ready to assist wherever they should see any disorder". Noronha was also instructed to burn the Calicut ships in the harbour for the security of the invading fleet.

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[1] *Commentaries of A. Albuquerque*, Hakluyt, Vol. II, p. 60.

As the Marshal proceeded, he saw some Calicut Nayars who were ill-clad. He chuckled in anticipation of an easy victory. He told his ensign, "Is this your Calicut that you terrify us all with in Portugal?"[1] Gasper Pereira replied gravely that the Marshal would think differently before long. The old Marshal was so tired by the time he came up to a mosque and set fire to it that he had to be supported by two soldiers the rest of the way. At the palace gate the invaders attacked with vigour a party of 200 Nayars who barred the way, causing them to fall back. The Marshal entered the courtyard and the soldiers scattered themselves in search of plunder. The Marshal needed rest. He laid himself down on a large block of stone and "remained there for a long space of time without being able to stir".

The city was now in an uproar and large bodies of Hindus and Moslems armed themselves in haste and rushed towards the palace. They poured in through the gateways and began to hunt down the Portuguese. The Marshal made an unsuccessful attempt to rally his men. Albuquerque came up with the rearguard whom he drew up in close order on a broad terrace. The men of Calicut assailed them with arrows obliging Albuquerque to open fire with a field gun which he had brought up. The situation was grave and Albuquerque sent a message to the Marshal asking him to retire. The Nayars had raised their war-cry which was a call to arms, relayed from man to man, until it was heard all over the city. The Marshal was stubborn. When Albuquerque saw that the Marshal's obstinacy placed the lives of his followers in danger, he went to him and told him in a towering rage that he should retire to the ships at once. The Marshal agreed to do so and requesting Albuquerque to lead the retreat, stayed back for a while to set fire to the palace in order to divert the attention of the Nayars.

The road of their retreat lay between pallisades and along trenches.The Portuguese maintained the semblance of order as they retreated, but all discipline gave way when they were set upon by the citizens with a ceaseless shower of arrows and short lances. To check this annoyance Albuquerque wheeled round, but of the 600 men he had with him only a handful stood by him. The rest ran towards the boat in a panic. Many fidalgos and captains fell. Albuquerque himself was wounded in the shoulder and had to be carried to the beach. Çutinho who was bringing up the rear fell

[1] Ibid.

and of his band none escaped. The destruction of the vanguard was averted by timely action by Don Noronha. The Portuguese "were so thoroughly beside themselves, that on reaching the beach, they threw away their arms and got into the water intending to take refuge in the boats".

The Portuguese attempt to destroy Calicut ended in disaster. Zeinuddin estimates the Portuguese slain at 500 "and a great number who were drowned".[1]

When the Zamorin heard of this, he broke camp hurriedly and returned to the capital. The king summoned his principal Moors and "blamed them greatly for the excessive weakness they had shown in the defence of their city". Thereafter he concentrated on the construction of light and fast rowing vessels, caturis and paroes, which were to be employed constantly for harassment and patrol.[2] The Calicut seamen devised a system of coastal communication by means of signals relayed from hilltops which conveyed news of the movement of enemy ships. This new mode of offensive proved successful.

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[1] *Tohafut-ul-Mujahidin.*

[2] Panikkar, K.M., *Malabar and the Portuguese*, p. 81.

THIRTEEN

Troubled Waters

ALBUQUERQUE was quick to realise this new danger and wrote to his king about the futility of blockading Calicut.

> 'Your caravels and small vessels do not dare to send out their boats while they have a 100 paroes laden with merchandise around one ship and freight her in two hours and with the right wind goes the round of the sea, and your vessels remain at anchor. One goes out of Ponnani, another from Pandarani, some others from Cranganore (Kodungallur) and others from Chalea (Chaliyam)....They have always done navigation and will continue unless you have those ports occupied with some very good ships and some rowing vessels to be close upon the shore.'

Smarting under the humiliation of the Calicut misadventure, Albuquerque made a diplomatic attempt to involve Krishna Deva Raya, "King of Besnag" (Vijayanagar), the most powerful king of South India, in a war against Calicut. He despatched Fr. Luis to the king with instruction to tell him how he had destroyed the city of Calicut and that a conquest of the kingdom of the Zamorin could be easily achieved, if the army of Vijayanagar would descend the ghats and cooperate with the Portuguese. In return, he promised a diversion of the profitable trade in horses from the port of Goa to Bhatkal, thereby ruining the revenue of the Sultan of Deccan, an enemy of the king of Vijayanagar. Besides Fr. Luis was asked to offer the help of the Portuguese fleet and arms against the Sultan. These attractive offers were, however, neglected by the Raya who needed some striking proof of Portuguese strength.

It was after this that Albuquerque set out on an expedition to the Red Sea. Timoja met the Captain General at the port of Mirjan and dissuaded him from proceeding further. As for Turks, Albuquerque had no need to seek them in far away places, for there were many already in the pay and favour of the Governor of the Fort of Goa. Timoja informed Albuquerque that the Governor of Goa had given shelter to a Turkish captain and his men, who had escaped from the battle of Diu and that they had employed native carpenters and caulkers to build a number of vessels after the Portuguese fashion and to manufacture fire arms. Timoja appealed to Albuquerque to go against Goa and to capture it. He placed himself under Portuguese orders. He hoped to gain the Governorship of the Island of Goa in return for these services.

The story of the treacherous and unprovoked attack on Goa, its capture, loss and recapture is too long to be narrated even briefly in this context. In these wars the Portuguese were assisted by the Rajas of Cochin, Cannanore and the friendly chieftains of the Konkan coast.

The recapture of Goa gave the Portuguese an advantage. The Sultan of Cambay and Adil Khan sent their ambassadors to Albuquerque to gain favourable terms. Mir Hussain, the Turkish Admiral, waited in vain for some more time for succour from the Grand Sultan. He gave up all hopes and returned to Suez. Even the Zamorin found it necessary to send his ambassador to Goa. This favourable turn of events pleased Albuquerque. He sent Samuel Rangel with instruction to secure a site from the Zamorin for the erection of a fortress in Calicut "opposite the Kings' Jetty". The Zamorin, however, did not comply with this dangerous request. Albuquerque thought it wise to leave the Zamorin to himself for a while and proceeded to Malacca. On his return from a successful expedition, he sailed again to the Red Sea to put an end to the disquieting rumours of an impending attack by the Rumes[1] which spread alarm along the coast. He knew that an unfriendly Zamorin could seriously jeopardise Portuguese interests. He wrote to King Manoel setting forth the advantages of making peace with Calicut.

> 'It is the hostility of Calicut to us that makes Venezia (Venice) confident of all things of India and put such trust in her foreign trade. It is that which makes Cairo equip fleets trusting to eject your ships and men out of India. If what you wish is to stop her Commerce with Mecca you would better effect it with peace than by warfare.'

In 1512 Albuquerque came to Cranganore to carry on negotiation with the Eralpad, brother of the Zamorin. The Moors of Calicut were opposed to this move; Shah Bantar Koja, the king's factor of the sea, prevailed on the queen-mother to use her influence to prevent the conclusion of a treaty of peace with a people who had polluted the palace and attempted to destroy it. The Portuguese factor at Cochin who knew that peace with Calicut meant the commercial fall of Cochin and his own impoverishment in consequence, instigated the Raja of Cochin to invade the kingdom of the Zamorin hoping to drag Albuquerque into a war on Calicut. The Zamorin remained obdurate. Albuquerque sent his nephew, Don Garcia de Noronha, with a fleet to blockade Calicut and to do "as much harm as he could" to the Zamorin to hasten a decision.

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[1] Byzantine Turks.

When the Raja of Cochin learnt that Albuquerque was secretly planning to make a treaty with the Zamorin, he sought the assistance of the Portuguese captains at Cochin, Lorenzo Moreno and Antonio Real, to prevent a settlement. There was a stormy meeting between Albuquerque and the Raja of Cochin. The Raja accused Albuquerque of abandoning his cause. Albuquerque flew into a passion and accused the Raja of prolonging the conflict to gain his own ends. "You wish that this argument should be always going. ...So, let every one look after his own interest," he said to the Raja. The Raja appealed to the King of Portugal: "All India is now surprised at Your Majesty concluding a treaty with a king who has been guilty of such treachery...without consulting me. ...I shall have no peace with him....This peace has been concluded only to insult me." Albuquerque did not value the private interests of any prince above the current advantages of the pepper-trade. War with the Zamorin had proved unprofitable all these years and a successful naval blockade of Calicut would require the entire resources of the Portuguese. A fortress in Calicut would alter the whole situation and the Portuguese navy would be free to be used wherever needed. While these intrigues and negotiations were going on, the old Zamorin died,[1] and his successor, a friend of the Portuguese, came to the throne. Albuquerque hastened to Calicut and arranged a favourable treaty on the 24th December 1513. The Portuguese were allowed a site near the Calicut sea-shore to build a fortress. There were also certain stipulations relating to the navigation of Calicut ships. The terms of the treaty were realistic.

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[1] Albuquerque wrote to his king: "I hold it for certain that the Nampiadiri slew the Zamorin with poison because in all my letters I bid him to kill the Zamorin with poison and that in a peace treaty I would come to an agreement with him."

Bitter experience had taught the Zamorin not to place any reliance on the vaunted strength of the Egyptian fleet. The coalition of the coastal princes had been disappointing. It was plain that the Moors were fast losing their command of the Indian sea trade. The trade between Calicut and Arabia had to be carried on in stealth, and it was of negligible volume.

But the grant of a site at Calicut to build a fortress was a great blunder, as will be seen later on. It lowered the military prestige of the Zamorin. Strategically, it was a fatal concession. It did not take the king long to realise this.

Until the death of Albuquerque in 1515 this treaty was respected on both sides. The great soldier died broken-hearted, a victim of the jealousy of his slanderous countrymen. Albuquerque's successors violated its terms and began to cause annoyance to the Zamorin.

The new Zamorin sent two envoys to Lisbon with an offer of supplies for ship-builders at Calicut, for the Portuguese had already begun the construction of ships in India. The newly established friendship did not last and threatened to break down even during the life of the Zamorin who made the treaty. The successors of Albuquerque were arrogant and broke some of the stipulations of the treaty of 1513. Secure in their strong fort, they encroached upon the rights of Calicut traders and forbade the export of ginger and pepper. They began to seize Indian ships. "They took by force what was not willingly given" complains Zeinuddin. On one occasion Lopo Soarez demanded that the Zamorin should wait upon him in the fort. But the Portuguese captains refused to take part in such a silly cause. On another occasion, they invited the Zamorin to the fort under the pretext of presenting him with some valuable gifts said to have been sent by the Viceroy of the Europeans, but their intention was "the seizure of his person". A good Portuguese soldier gave the Zamorin a sign to warn him of the danger and the Zamorin was thus enabled to escape. However, the uneasy truce continued till 1522, when the Zamorin who signed the peace treaty died.

One of the valiant captains of the Zamorin, Kutti Ali, began to harass Portuguese shipping and defy the blockade. He knew well that it was futile to attack the Portuguese ships in pitched battles and he got ready a large number of light armed boats. These were used in commando raids on the Portuguese factories on the coast or in sudden swoops on Portuguese patrol ships. The new tactics appears to have been effective for we notice a considerable increase in the number of Indian and Arab spice-ships which sailed for Aden.

In the month of August 1515, King Manoel received intelligence of great naval preparation commenced by the Grand Sultan of Egypt who was annoyed at the Portuguese penetration into the Red Sea. The Sultan had ordered the construction of a large number of galleys and galleons equipped with artillery. The king of Portugal regretted having ordered the recall of Albuquerque, for he was not aware that the great soldier was dead.

Lopo Soarez sailed from Goa on the 8th day of February 1526 in search of the Cairo fleet which under the command of Ras Sulaiman was reported to be in the Red Sea. He returned to Goa in September after a lengthy cruise in which he accomplished nothing save the capture of a few merchant vessels. Lopo Soarez appears to have carefully avoided an engagement. His main activity during his voyage was piracy. It is reported that Don Alvaro de Castro, captain of one of the brigantines, so overloaded his ship with captured goods that his ship heeled over and sank with forty of his crew.

It was about this time that the Portuguese made a thrust towards China. Captain Fernão Peres arrived off the City of Canton. The Chinese gave him a warm welcome. Permission to trade with China was granted to the Portuguese. The arrogant conduct of the visitors, however, enraged the Chinese Government. They sent a squadron to attack the foreigners and expelled them from the country.

Another Portuguese pirate named João de Silveira was active near the Maldive Islands. He preyed upon the merchantmen of Gujarat and Bengal and made two notable prizes. After this exploit he sailed for Bengal in the hope of establishing trade with that kingdom. A young Bengalee prisoner on board disclosed to his countrymen the piracies committed by these traders. As a result, no Bengalee merchant would trade with the Portuguese and Silveira returned disappointed. An attempt made by Captain Cheradinheiro to take possession of the Maldives proved a failure. He ill-treated the islanders so severely that they rose in revolt and with the help of Malabar sailors massacred the garrison. Thereafter the islanders were left to themselves.

The Sultan of Gujarat and his Governor of the Port of Diu continued to hope for Egyptian naval succour for yet another attack on the Portuguese. A few years earlier Captain Lima of the Calicut Fort writing to King Manoel in December 1518 had reported that seven Egyptian galleons had arrived at Diu and that fourteen others had been completed in the different ports of Gujarat. "These are to assemble at Diu and join the Rumes." The Governor of Goa ordered Diogo Lopes de Beja to proceed against Diu and attack the shipping. In the first encounter Malik Ayaz defeated the enemy fleet and forced it to withdraw. A few months later, reinforced by a squadron, Diogo Lopes made a fresh attack on Diu. Malik Ayaz fought a fine engagement and routed the Portuguese and sank some of their ships. Defeated twice and in full retreat, Diogo Lopes had his revenge on an Arab merchantman which he took. The Arabs, whom he captured, he distributed among the vessels of his fleet. One of them, a prisoner on board Antonio Correa's vessel, managed to set fire to the powder and blew up the ship, destroying both the vessel and its crew.

Don Alexis de Menezes who ordered the next attack on Diu fared no better. Malik Ayaz came out with fifty vessels and engaged the Portuguese fleet and he won a splendid victory. He was in complete command of the sea in the vicinity of Chawl so that no Portuguese ship could put out to sea. It was only after the arrival of reinforcement under Don Luiz that the situation improved for the Portuguese.

King Manoel died in January 1521, and his successor, King John III, sent Don Durate de Menezes to India as governor. He assumed office on the 22nd January 1522, and straightway sent his brother, Don Luiz, to Ormuz, where the arrogance of the Portuguese factors had brought about a revolt. Ormuz, Muscat, Bahrein and Sohar rose against the Portuguese simultaneously. But the king of Persia was murdered by one of the local factions and the uprising came to nothing. The new king who was a young boy concluded a treaty with the Portuguese. The terms of this treaty were suicidal as far as the political and commercial interests of Persia were concerned.

The administration of Durate de Menezes was so corrupt that Vasco da Gama, now elevated to the title of a "conde", who was sent again for the third time, described him as the "Scandal of Portugal."[1] Those who wish to know the details of his misgovernment will find an indictment of his administration in a long letter[1] which the Chamber of Goa submitted to the king of Portugal. Vasco da Gama exerted himself prodigiously to remedy the defects and restore Portuguese trade and prestige. Apart from the corruption and weakness of administration, there were instances of serious indiscipline among the Governors of the Forts and their garrison. Trade on private account was being carried on to the grave prejudice of the Crown of Portugal. The soldier traded the king's arms and artillery for pepper and spices. Sometimes, they banded together and plundered villages and temples. Vasco da Gama adopted quick and stern measures to put down the former evil.

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[1] Danvers' *The Portuguese in India*, Vol I. (Letter dated 31st October 1524 from the Chamber of Goa), p. 365.

The Portuguese system of permits for the plying of Asian vessels afforded no safety or advantage to the owners, for the captains of the Portuguese patrol caravels fell upon all vessels indiscriminately, whether they held permits or not. In some ways, the taking out of a permit was a disadvantage, for the owners had to declare their freight and destination—information which the Portuguese pirates used to the best advantage to waylay and rob them. The mercantile shipping of India and Asia was hit hard by their impositions. The inhabitants of the coastal towns lived in constant dread of their raids. They interfered with the export of rice from the Kanara ports and created famine in Malabar. During this period of adversity India produced a naval leader whose reckless courage and genius afforded the country a brief respite in her distress. He was an officer of the Zamorin's fleet—Captain Kutti Ali.

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[1] Ibid.

FOURTEEN

The Exploits of Captain Kutti Ali

CAPTAIN Kutti Ali was one of the officers of the Zamorin's fleet and served Mohammed Kunjali Marakkar, the Admiral of Calicut. Mohammed, originally a marine-merchant of Cochin, was a Mopla and he was forced by the high-handedness of the Portuguese to migrate to Ponnani, a port of the Zamorin, where he settled with his family, carried on his trade and attempted to repair his broken fortune. A brave warrior and an experienced seaman, Mohammed watched with growing alarm the rapacity of the Portuguese, their violation of agreements, their contempt of Islam and their acts of aggression on sea and land. He and his brother, Ibrahim, went to Calicut and offered their swords, ships and services to the Zamorin in his war on the Portuguese. The king accepted their services and conferred on Mohammed the title of Kunj Ali,[1] the beloved. That they were men of considerable influence and worth is clear from the fact that both Henrique de Menezes and Lopo Vaz de Sampayo feared the consequences of an alliance between them and the Zamorin, and made a furious attack on Ponnani to destroy the Marakkar's fleet. Thereafter, Kunjali Marakkar took to the sea and attacked Portuguese vessels whenever he fell in with them. He chose able and brave captains and Kutti Ali was the greatest of them all. Kunjali and Pachi Marakkar, another officer of the Zamorin's navy, fought several battles with the Portuguese. To their vigilance and valour, the Zamorin owed the little that remained of Calicut's overseas trade in spices. The circumstances of their death in the Ceylon war will be found narrated in another chapter.

Kutti Ali was a realist. He was the captain of a ship belonging to a squadron based on Tanore. He realised that Calicut ships had no chance of victory in pitched naval battles and resolved on a course of sea-guerilla which proved eminently successful. The heavy Portuguese vessels were slow, except when they sailed with favourable winds. Captain Kutti Ali constructed war-paroes—fast boats rowed by thirty or forty armed men—which could be navigated even in shallow waters. He had hundreds of such boats stationed in every river mouth and creek. His men stationed on hilltops kept watch over the sea and signalled the movement of enemy vessels to the war-paroes. Flotilla after flotilla would then streak out from different points and attack the enemy. These small boats presented a difficult target to the enemy's cannon. By setting fire to the sails and tackles these sailors would immobilise the enemy's ship and board her. In the hand to hand fight, Indian seamen generally gave no quarter nor asked for any.

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[1] In Malayalam *Kunju* is an endearing term. It is a diminutive prefixed to proper nouns and signifies affection. Marakkar means Captain or owner of a ship from Tamil, Marakalam, ship.

Under cover of these engagements Captain Kutti Ali managed to send out to sea Indian and Arab ships freighted with merchandise. Kutti Ali provided them with escort. Thus, while he destroyed Portuguese vessels, he aimed at maintaining the spice-trade of Calicut with foreign countries. The Portuguese were obliged to convoy their merchantmen in these waters. As a result there was a diminution of the volume of their trade. Albuquerque complained to his king that Portuguese ships of Cannanore did not dare to send supplies to Cochin for fear of being captured. "Calicut greatly oppressed us with their paroes. The Calicut men would watch on the mountain heights, and any atalaya or parao they see coming, they at once pounce upon."

In the year 1523, Kutti Ali brought to Calicut a fleet of 200 ships. He freighted eight ships with pepper and despatched them with an escort of forty vessels to the Red Sea before the very eyes of the Portuguese. In these operations, Kutti Ali was assisted by his younger brother who is described by Portuguese historians as the younger Kutti Ali. The two brothers commanded each a fleet; the younger Kutti Ali cruised about in the North, in the vicinity of Goa while the elder remained near Cochin. Sometimes Kutti Ali ventured out with his whole fleet. Off Cannanore his fleet fought a great battle with a squadron commanded by Sampayo. The result was not decisive. The fleet returned to Calicut and subjected the Portuguese fort to a furious bombardment. The old Zamorin was dead and the new ruler was hostile to the Portuguese. Though there was no declaration of war then and a treaty was nominally in force, there were frequent encounters between the two fleets. There was an undeclared war on the seas. Captain Kutti Ali's fleet lay off Calicut and began to harass the Portuguese so that their vessels could not make for the open sea with safety. Vasco da Gama who was then in India sent one of his ablest seamen, Martin Affonso D'Souza, for the relief of Calicut. D'Souza engaged Kutti Ali's fleet at Kappat. After a fiercely contested battle the issue of which was undecided, Kutti Ali withdrew to Pantalayini for replenishment. D'Souza came upon him the next day and drove the fleet before him as far as Cannanore. In the fight which developed off Cannanore D'Souza was victorious and forced Kutti Ali to abandon his ships. Kutti Ali's brother, the younger Kutti Ali, also suffered a similar fate when George Tellia induced him to fight a pitched battle off Goa.

Among the leaders of the naval-guerilla were two other distinguished captains, Pattu Marakkar and Balia Hassan. Pattu Marakkar assisted by the Atikal of Purakkad seized and sank every Portuguese ship he fell in with. Balia Hassan, a captain from Cannanore, was a relative of the Raja of Arakkal, near Cannanore. He had proved himself so great a nuisance to the Portuguese that Vasco da Gama was compelled to proceed to Cannanore and ask the Raja to surrender him. The Raja tried to put him off, but in the end, he surrendered Balia Hassan to Vasco da Gama who had him thrown into a dungeon in the Cannanore Fort. When Henry Menezes succeeded Vasco da Gama, one of his first acts was to order the execution of Balia Hassan.[1] The Arakkal Raja offered a heavy ransom but that was refused. The Raja of Kolathiri himself intervened but it was to no purpose. Balia Hassan was executed in the Portuguese fort at Cannanore. Moslem opposition to the Portuguese became more violent and implacable in consequence.

The new Zamorin declared war on the Portuguese and proceeded to attack their fort in Calicut. Menezes acted quickly and struck the first blow on the Zamorin's shipping at Ponnani. On the 26th February 1525, he bombarded Ponnani and succeeded in setting fire to some of the ships in the port. Captain Kutti Ali paid the Portuguese back in their own coin. In one reckless venture, he stealthily entered the port of Cochin, burnt all the Portuguese vessels he found there and made safe return. Menezes visited the port of Pantalayini, a flourishing Moslem settlement and an emporium of the trade with Arabia, which was well-defended by a large number of Nayars and Moslems. The Portuguese landed in three divisions and fought bravely and put the defenders to flight. They captured 250 cannon and large quantities of ammunition. In addition to this, they seized forty vessels, which they carried off with them to Cannanore. This event took place in the month of June 1525.

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[1] The part played by him in the war in Ceylon is mentioned in another page.

When the Zamorin laid siege to the fortress at Calicut in 1525, Kutti Ali supported the attack on the fort by intercepting supplies which came from Goa and Cochin and occasionally by bombarding the fort from the sea. The siege dragged on for five months. The garrison was in great hardship. On the 15th October, Menezes came in person commanding twenty ships to relieve the garrison. Kutti Ali harassed Portuguese shipping effectively. The Portuguese were compelled to abandon the fort. A year later 1526 Menezes died of a wound which he received in a fight with a Calicut ship off Beypore.

Lopo Vaz da Sampayo who succeeded Menezes undertook vigorous measures to put an end to the menace of Captain Kutti Ali's sea-guerilla and he appears to have met with greater success than his predecessor. In the year 1528, he proceeded against him with a powerful fleet. Kutti Ali evaded him for a while, but off Bacanore (Barkur), Sampayo's fleet compelled him to fight a pitched battle in which a great part of Kutti Ali's fleet was destroyed. Kutti Ali escaped with the remnant of his fleet. In the month of March the Portuguese won another victory over Kutti Ali's brother, Chinna Kutti Ali, whose fleet of sixty ships was encountered between Mangalore and Mt. Eli. D'Esa, the Portuguese Captain, succeeded in boarding the flagship. Chinna Kutti Ali was captured. He was released later for a high ransom, but only after he was made to swear on the Koran that he would not fight against the Portuguese.

In the month of September 1528, Chetwai, one of the ports of the Zamorin, was attacked by the Portuguese. They blockaded the river mouth in an attempt to bottle up several ships of Kunjali's fleet. This proved to be a fatal step for the Calicut vessels counter-attacked and destroyed several Portuguese ships and massacred the crew. The Portuguese version attributes the disaster to a violent east wind "which arose suddenly and drove the ships ashore". This, as William Logan points out in his *A Manual of Malabar*, is difficult to understand, "for an east wind ought to have blown them out to sea" and not towards the land. About the same period, the

Mopla settlement at Dharmadam produced a brave seaman, Ali Haj. Commanding a large number of armed boats, he secured the sea around so that Portuguese vessels were unable to come out to sea.

The activities of Kunjali and his captains were so effective that for a period of several years the sea communication between Cochin and Goa was interrupted. Goan trade was seriously curtailed and the king of Portugal was concerned over the loss of ships and trade. The Portuguese were not able to gain the mastery over the sea. Indian seamen were in such complete control of the maritime trade that we find Affonso Mexia complaining to the king (Letter dated the 15th January 1530) that "the principal reason that we have no pepper is because the coast is not well protected and it is taken to Mecca, Diu and elsewhere".

FIFTEEN

Indian Seamen in Ceylon

THE ARRIVAL of the Portuguese in the beautiful island of Ceylon was accidental. It was an ill wind that blew their ships to the coast of Galle; it was ill deeds that followed their settlement in the neighbourhood of Kotta, the seat of Ceylonese royalty.

In the year 1505, a very large fleet of twenty-two ships and fifteen thousand men came from Lisbon bringing Don Francisco de Almeida, the first Portuguese Viceroy of India. Don Lorenzo, the son of the Viceroy, straightway commenced a great search for several spice-ships, which, according to reports, were making their way to the Red Sea. He had information that several wealthy Moors were on board on their way to Cairo. The Arab vessels, more familiar with the sea, dodged in and out among the islands of the Maldives and the Laccadives, and escaped, while contrary winds, followed by a terrific storm, drove the Portuguese vessels so far off their course that Don Lorenzo found himself off the wooded heights of Galle when the storm abated. On the 15th November 1505, the battered fleet anchored off Kulamboturai (Colombo).

Though not so important a port as Calicut, Colombo was a vital link in the commerce between the Far East and the West. The harbour was crowded with junks and sampans from China and Malacca and the gharubs and the sewn and lateen-sailed ships of the Red Sea and Ormuz. There were Calicut ships; and a large number of Calicut and Cairo Moslems lived in the town carrying on their trade, principally in spices and Chinese goods. Many ships were built there, and as Barboza describes, "some, without any exaggeration, of a 1,000 and some others of 1,100 Bahars in bulk". It was here that the vessels from the East landed their goods which were transhipped in Arab vessels to the Red Sea. The Moors had a monopoly of the carrying trade. For over 800 years Ceylon (Serendib) had been the meeting point of two trade routes where the Chinese and Arab ships exchanged merchandise.

Events following the arrival of the Portuguese in Ceylon developed on the same pattern as those which resulted from Portuguese relations with Calicut. The foreign Moors resented the intrusion of the Portuguese whose conduct in the Indian Ocean had already become well-known in all the mercantile settlements and indeed throughout the East, wherever Arab vessels sailed. Having secured a foothold, the Portuguese helped themselves to whatever they had a fancy to take contrary to the established practice and usage of civilised trade.

King Dharma Parakrama Bahu was the king of Ceylon. He had a loose sway over a group of vassals some of whom frequently revolted against him. He is described as a wise and elderly man of dignified mien. The Portuguese sent an envoy ashore who was cordially welcomed with pomp and honour, and a trade agreement was entered into between the king and the Portuguese, the terms of which were inscribed on a sheet of gold.

The terms reproduced the established practice of the Portuguese in the East, a sample of which we saw in their treaty with the Rajas of Cochin and Cannanore. They acquired monopoly of the trade in the articles they required by which other trading nations were strictly excluded. Besides, European goods would be imported by them and by no other. Being powerful at sea, they were to guard the ports and coasts of the country against attacks by sea and generally help the king against his enemies. For purposes of conducting trade they were allowed to build settlements within which they enjoyed sovereign rights.[1]

Don Lorenzo was elated by the success of his mission and his joy found loud expression in the roar of a salute fired by the ship's artillery. When Dom Manuel heard this welcome news, he realised the full significance of the event and ordered the painting of a picture depicting the chief incidents of the discovery. He expressed his desire to have a fortress erected there as Ceylon enjoyed a central position on the trade route between the Red Sea and the Far East.

For a decade after the discovery of Ceylon there was no important development. The Portuguese were engaged deeply in the desperate struggles in India. They had to content themselves with whatever quantities of cinnamon they could get by trade or raid. After King Dharma Parakrama Bahu's death there was even less peace in the country. Dissension among the nobles and attacks on the coast by seafaring Moors from India became frequent. The tributary chieftain of Uda Rata revolted and was put down only after a tedious campaign. The Moors whose trade had suffered after the arrival of the Portuguese and who naturally resented the favours shown to them, were pleased whenever the Calicut fleet hove in sight on its periodical raid on the Portuguese settlement and shipping.

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[1] Pieris, *Ceylon, the Portuguese Era*, Colombo, Vol. I, p. 38.

For almost a decade we do not hear anything from Ceylon worth recording. In 1515, Lopo Soarez de Abergaria was appointed Governor of Cochin. Lopo Soarez was a pirate, perfidious and cruel by disposition. Dom Manuel ordered Soarez to build a fort in Ceylon. This fort was meant to strengthen the Portuguese grip on the island and to serve as yet another link in that chain of coastal fortresses designed to secure the trade and the trade route which was yearly lengthening out into the Far East. Lopo Soarez conducted his preparation secretly. Sounding the drum one day to summon all his captains on board his galley, he disclosed his plans to them. With a grandiloquence which appears to have been the way with the conquisitadores of the period, he exhorted his officers to high endeavours and wound up his speech with words which passed into a proverb in India, "Se a India, he may do ruin, Ceylão sera madrasta do honrado." It was his hope that the Portuguese would be able to repair in Ceylon whatever damage they might suffer in India.

On the 10th September 1518, he set sail with a big fleet carrying, besides material for the construction of a fort, a large number of Portuguese soldiers and a body of Nayars sent by the Raja of Cochin. More for the sake of formality than to gain his consent, he appears to have asked the king's permission to erect a small fort on a rocky headland near Colombo. The fortress was meant as a protection to the garrison guarding the factory. Soarez pointed out how the hostile attitude of the Moors made the erection of the fort imperative. The king was not prepared for such a demand and asked for time to consult his council. Lopo Soarez did not wait for a reply. He landed his men and material and commenced building operations with all despatch.

The Moors of Ceylon watched the new development with anxiety. What happened at Calicut happened at Colombo. The leading foreign merchants waited on the king in a deputation and urged him not to put any trust in the Portuguese. They pointed out to him how the Portuguese had first robbed the princes of India of their trade and next, of their political power. Later, the religion of their ancestors itself would be in peril. They had never interfered with the political affairs of the countries they traded with and they had never attempted to thrust their religion on those who did not desire it. The Moslems warned the king against making any concession in favour of the Portuguese, and on the whole, they appear to have had greater wisdom and foresight than the king and his council.

The construction of the fort infuriated the people of Kulambo-turai. They attacked the Portuguese, but the Portuguese artillery forced them to withdraw. The king blamed the Yonnu or Moors for the violence. It was true that the Moors had inspired the attack for which the overbearing conduct of Lopo Soarez had supplied the provocation. After long negotiation the king and the council decided to accept the situation, and granted a *sannad* for the construction of a fort which had already been in the process of erection.

Widespread Portuguese piracy in the Arabian Sea had interfered with the Zamorin's seaborne trade to the Red Sea and confined it to the eastern countries of Malacca, Pegu and China. Now, even this trade was threatened. No wonder Calicut resented the presence of the Portuguese at Colombo. The Zamorin bent all his energies to the task of expelling the Portuguese from Ceylon and reducing the fortress.

The Zamorin's resolve to fight the Portuguese wherever they were to be found extended his interest to Ceylon. The Arab merchants, the last vestiges of whose trade with the Far East were threatened by Colombo, prevailed upon the Zamorin to send a powerful force to Ceylon. The people of Simhala were hostile to the foreigners and could be counted upon to give the Zamorin every help. The Moors of Ceylon, though a small community, were wealthy and powerful, and their assistance in the undertaking would be invaluable. Cairo, they assured the Zamorin, was getting ready a fleet with the intention of sweeping the Portuguese out of the Indian seas and the arrival of that fleet was imminent. The Zamorin needed no exhortation. The Portuguese had hurt both his dignity and his trade and he got ready a great fleet for an attack on Colombo.

In Ceylon the Portuguese made themselves unpopular. "The arrogance of the Soldado, their arbitrary interference between the Sinhalese and the moors and their avowed determination to exclude the latter from all participation in the rich trade of Colombo made them so hated that the inhabitants declined to sell them provisions which formed their chief source of food. Passive obstruction developed into open resistance; stragglers into the town were set upon and some were killed."[1] Violence broke out soon after. De Brito, a Portuguese Captain, sallied out on a hot summer's day and attacked the town when the inhabitants were enjoying a siesta. It was an unprovoked attack designed to gain plunder. The citizens who were taken by surprise, overcame their panic, rallied and hurried to defend their homes, wives and children. They gave chase to the Portuguese and killed thirty soldiers who were overburdened with the weight of the loot they were carrying. The king, naturally, had his sympathies with his subjects. Daily reports of Portuguese misconduct came to him and as De Brito employed threats to intimidate the king, open hostilities were soon begun.

In 1520 the king besieged Colombo fortress. While sallies and counter-attacks were going on around the fort, internal dissensions became apparent in the king's court. At this stage in the history of the island there emerges an extraordinary prince, Mayadunne, whose ambition to become the king of Lanka was only equalled in intensity by his implacable hostility to the Portuguese. Mayadunne was the brother of the then reigning king Wijaya Bahu, and the chief of Sitawaka, a rich province. He had resented Portuguese intrusion from the very beginning. The rich Moors of Ceylon found in Mayadunne a champion of their cause and they supported him with men and money. Here was an excellent opportunity for Mayadunne to throw the Portuguese out of the country. But instead of joining the besiegers to become the Chakravarthi of Lanka, his wild ambition prompted him to lead an attack against the king's army when it was deeply engaged in the attack. A portion of Wijaya Bahu's army declared itself in Mayadunne's favour and the king, who appears to have been incapable of any strong line of action, sued for peace. De Brito, taking advantage of the confusion, improved the fortification. During this period the seadogs of the Zamorin made frequent attacks on the fort and the shipping in Colombo harbour causing great damage. Besides, standing off the coast of Ceylon, they fell upon the spice-laden ships of the Portuguese leaving the port.

King Manuel the Fortunate died on the 12th December 1521 at Belem and was succeeded by Don João III, a bigot. The Captain of Colombo pointed out to him the uselessness of maintaining the fort. A factory would suffice to secure the commercial advantages Portugal required. The Governor, Don Durate de Menezes, was also of the same view and when Don Vasco da Gama came to India in 1524 as Viceroy, he had instruction to give effect to the recommendation of the captain.

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[1] Pieris, *Ceylon, the Portuguese Era*, Vol. I.

Thus at the end of 1524, fourteen years after its erection, the fort was abandoned. The king was only too glad to give them all help in the evacuation. Nuno Fereyra de Andrade was left behind as factor. The Viceroy also ordered the demolition of the fortress in order to avoid any occasion for friction in the future. A small number of Portuguese was left behind, and the Viceroy wrote to the king to extend his protection to them. The king, glad to be rid of the Portuguese, promised to do this.

Thus ended the first attempt made by the Portuguese to establish a settlement in Lanka. But fresh efforts were made later.

The seadogs of the Zamorin who had, time and again, harassed the Portuguese fort and shipping in retaliation for their piracy appeared once again before Colombo. Balia Hassan who was subsequently executed at Cannanore commanded the fleet. He had come with the object of capturing the Portuguese remaining at the factory in order to secure their services for his master, the Zamorin. He conveyed to the king the congratulations of the Zamorin and demanded the surrender of the Portuguese left behind. He gave out that his master had won a signal victory over the entire Portuguese fleet of Don Henrique de Menezes and that even the kings of Cochin and Cannanore had risen against the Portuguese and were besieging their forts. The Zamorin required the services of the Portuguese in these operations and as soon as the war was over he would restore them to the king.

Balia Hassan, it may be surmised, was not so keen on securing the services of a handful of Portuguese, however valuable they might be, as on bringing about a split between the king of Ceylon and the Portuguese thereby. The king acted with circumspection and rectitude. He had perhaps heard how the Zamorin had made a similar demand on the Raja of Cochin and how that Raja had, on grounds both of policy and Dharma, refused to surrender the Portuguese left under his protection. The king, Bhuvaneka Bahu, summoned his council. The Portuguese were also invited. The council resolved to verify the report of the Zamorin's naval victory and sent an envoy to Cochin who arrived there just in time to witness the triumphal return of De Menezes after his victory at Coulette.[1] The envoy returned to the king and made his report.

When the envoy was away the Portuguese factor thought of a stratagem which, he hoped, would make the Zamorin's seamen hostile to the king. The Malabar seamen had beached their vessels for purposes of repair. Nuno Fereyra de Andrade prevailed upon certain Sinhalese mercenaries to join him in a surprise attack on the unsuspecting Moors. The Moors fought with desperate courage and many fell on both sides. The Portuguese at length succeeded in capturing two of their vessels. The rest of the Moors made good their escape and sought refuge with Mayadunne. The Portuguese offered the captured ships as a present to Bhuvaneka Bahu, but the king declined to receive the gift which, he knew, would cause him further troubles.

Some of these seamen who had managed to escape to India made their report to the Zamorin. The Zamorin ordered the despatch of seven vessels and within a space of three months the fleet appeared before Colombo. The factor and the Portuguese ran to the king's palace for refuge. The Calicut seamen demanded their surrender. There were only eight Portuguese left, the others having escaped to India. The king, who did not like the insolence of the demand, sent Virapulli Arachi, one of his captains, to punish the Moors. The Moors were driven away and the Sinhalese captured four out of the seven vessels. The Portuguese factor who joined the fray was wounded and two other Portuguese soldiers were killed.

The seamen returned to the attack again and again and the Portuguese were obliged to leave the factory and seek safety in the king's palace. The Zamorin's sailors established themselves firmly on the east coast of Ceylon. They constantly attacked Portuguese shipping and their depredations alarmed the Portuguese Government.

About this time Mayadunne and Rayigama Badala quarrelled with their brother, King Bhuvaneka Bahu. The Calicut seamen gave the rebels every assistance. The king found himself obliged to seek Portuguese aid and they were quite willing to help. The Moors were blamed as the instigators of the insurgence and everywhere they became suspect. The political climate of Colombo was not congenial to the Moorish traders. They did not want to be involved in the civil war. A large number of these rich merchants left the country. Others stealthily removed themselves to Sitawaka where the rebel princes received them with open arms. Exaggerated report of the size and strength of the rebel army alarmed the king. He hastily summoned the Portuguese Captain and urged him to reconstruct the dismantled fort and build a high watchtower at his expense. The Portuguese however declined the offer.

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[1] Pantalayini Kollam, a town in north Malabar.

The Moslem refugees advised Mayadunne to send an embassy to the Zamorin to seek his assistance. The Moors pointed out to him that Portuguese strength lay in their fleet and the Zamorin's navy was the only naval force in Indian waters capable of challenging it. Besides, the Zamorin was the only king of India who manufactured cannon of the type used by the Portuguese.

Mayadunne now conceived a great plan. The Zamorin would favour an enemy of the Portuguese on the throne of Lanka. He planned to take the Zamorin's help to usurp the throne. He sent his minister to Calicut with rich presents. The minister appealed for the active help of the Zamorin's navy in the war, in return for which, he promised to give the Zamorin certain ports in Lanka. The offer suited the Zamorin's policy. Naval bases in Ceylon would help him to harass the Portuguese shipping engaged in the China trade. The trade of Cochin would come under his control. The Zamorin summoned his captains, Pachi Marakkar and his brother Kunjali Marakkar, and ordered the despatch of a strong expeditionary force to Ceylon. A merchant of Cairo who had settled in Calicut, Ali Ibrahim by name, was also sent with the fleet. The fleet and equipment were assembled at the port of Ponnani situated at the mouth of a river of the same name. Anticipating the support of the Zamorin, Mayadunne, somewhat prematurely, proclaimed himself Emperor of Lanka and called upon the people to recognise him as their overlord.

The king immediately sent a message to the Portuguese for help. So great was Mayadunne's war-like preparation that many Sinhalese deserted the king's forces and joined the rebels. From Goa a strong force came to the assistance of the king under Martin de Mello. Mayadunne invested Kotta where he was joined by

Pachi Marakkar who had already landed in Ceylon. The Zamorin had sent a large body of Moplas and Nayars. It was unfortunate for Mayadunne that the redoubtable Kunjali Marakkar was unable to start owing to illness. Ibrahim too was delayed. The Malabar soldiers had a quantity of fire arms which did such execution that the king's forces had to withdraw sustaining severe losses. It was then that news was received that a powerful Portuguese fleet had started from Goa and was sailing along the coast in search of the Marakkars. Mayadunne, deceived by wild reports of Portuguese strength, hastily raised the siege. He was also disappointed because only one instalment of naval help had reached him from Calicut. Pachi Marakkar was anxiously scanning the sea for signs of the rest of the Calicut fleet when Mayadunne raised the siege, and he too had to fall back on Sitawaka in the general retreat. Mayadunne sued for peace which the king readily granted.

Pachi Marakkar did not actually leave the island but gathered his ships and hovered near the island, concealing himself in the shallow creeks, well out of reach of the heavier Portuguese ships. He reappeared before Colombo and compelled Nuno Fereyra, as usual, to run for refuge to Kotta. The Marakkar on his part did his best to persuade Mayadunne to recommence hostilities, but the latter was still in a repentant mood. He richly rewarded his allies and endeavoured to send them back to Calicut. Pachi Marakkar, however, remained on the island.

Some of the Malabar seamen in Mayadunne's service urged him to send a fresh embassy to get the Zamorin's help. The Zamorin was getting ready one of the biggest fleet he had ever sent out, and as rumours of these preparations came to him, the ever active and ambitious Mayadunne got over his mood of contrition by degrees, and began certain minor engagements against some of the petty chiefs which were only a prelude to a fresh declaration of war against the king. The help promised by the Zamorin arrived soon and in October 1536, a large Calicut fleet hove in sight. It brought 4,000 fighting men, Moplas and Nayars. A forest of masts surrounded the Colombo promontory.

His period of repentance now definitely over, Mayadunne began the siege of the Portuguese fortress. Attack after attack by the combined forces was warded off by the Portuguese assisted by the Sinhalese. At this juncture Martin Affonso de Souza, captain of the seas, arrived with a strong force. Before it was too late and even before De Souza had landed all his men and equipment, Mayadunne, with customary alacrity, became repentant, sued for peace and withdrew.

Pachi Marakkar had been vigilant and had early inklings of the move made by Mayadunne for the restoration of peace. He had watched the strange movements of messengers and elephants carrying presents between Mayadunne's camp and Kotta, the king's capital, and had, besides, reliable spies in the city who reported developments to him. Realising the danger of being trapped on land, he took to the sea several days before the Portuguese landed and sailed away in disgust at the behaviour of his unreliable ally.

The Zamorin was annoyed at the failure of the expeditionary force. Despairing of any sustained support from his Sinhalese allies, he resolved to fight the Portuguese on the seas. The same three leaders were chosen and at the end of 1537, a large fleet of fifty-one vessels was got ready at Ponnani. There were 8,000 soldiers, including 1,000 arquebusiers on board and 400 pieces of artillery.[1] This great fleet coasted along led by the flagship and captured several Portuguese ships on its way including the famous vessel, *Sao Pedro*, which had an unbeaten record of twenty-two voyages to India. Later on, they made prize of a *parangue* laden with cinnamon. The fleet plundered Tuticorin where the Portuguese had established a settlement to the great annoyance of the local inhabitants. With the closer approach of the Malabar fleet, Mayadunne overcame his remorse well enough to declare war once again on his brother, the king. Bhuvaneka Bahu turned to the Portuguese for succour. Nuno de Cunha, Governor of India, sent orders to De Souza who was at Chale to hasten to Ceylon.

It was in this year (1537) that a portent was seen in the sky, a comet of strange appearance, which filled the mind of the Sinhalese and the Portuguese alike with the fear of an impending calamity.

The Calicut army landed and entrenched themselves in the palm-groves of Vidulai, a village between Killakkara and the temple of Rameswaram. The ships were drawn ashore while the final preparations were being made to sail for Ceylon. Pachi Marakkar levied troops among Moslems and Hindus and greatly increased his strength. He was under the mistaken impression that the Portuguese fleet would be required to protect Diu where the arrival of the Rumes (the Turks) was expected. The Turkish fleet, reinforced by the fleet of the Sultan of Cambay, would keep the Portuguese engaged, and the Marakkar thought he could land in Ceylon and reduce the country unmolested. He carried on an effective blockade of the ports of Ceylon.

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[1] This according to Pieris. Fr. Ferroli has, "2,000 crew, one thousand of them being arquebusiers." See the *The Jesuits in Malabar*, Vol. I, p. 118. Of the Zamorin's royal emblems, which are four in number, the red figure of Hanuman rampant on a white field was probably the device emblazoned on the flag of the admiral.

When Martin Affonso de Souza heard that the Markkar had reached the Fishery Coast, he sailed south with all speed. At Manapad, he heard reports of the great strength of the Indian fleet. Failing in his efforts to gain the help of the chieftains of Manapad, De Souza returned to Cochin to equip himself better for the engagement.

The Marakkar was lulled into a false sense of security and he was taken by surprise when De Souza suddenly appeared off Vidulai. On the 30th January 1538, just before dawn, De Souza began his offensive with a furious bombardment from the sea. The Calicut captains rallied their men and speedily got some of their vessels launched and with difficulty drew their ships into battle order. A long and terrible fight followed in which the fortunes of the battle varied on both sides. Ali Ibrahim Marakkar, one of the three chiefs, fell and his squadron was unable to play an effective role in the general engagement. The issue was decided at 10 a.m. The Portuguese won a great victory. They took 400 cannon, 2,000 muskets and many other weapons in addition to twenty-two war-paroes. Among the trophies taken were Pachi Marakkar's gorgeous tent and a state parasol, a royal present of the Zamorin to Mayadunne. By a strange irony of fate this umbrella of state came into the hands of the Zamorin's dynastic enemy, the Raja of Cochin, to whom the victorious admiral, De Souza, made a present of it.

Now let us hear another version of this battle summarised from the accounts left by later historians. According to this account the Mohammedans aimed at the restoration of their power and influence on the southern coast of India and in Ceylon because of their interest in the pearl fishery coast and because it was also the area of the evangelising enterprise of Christian priests.

Towards the close of 1537 the Zamorin's fleet consisting of fifty large heavily equipped war-paroes and 2,000 crew, one thousand of them being arquebusiers, sailed to the Fishery Coast and plundered

Tuticorin. They entrenched themselves in a grove of palms near Vidulai close to the pagoda of Rameswaram, near the Pampan Straits. They drew their ships ashore preparatory to sailing for Colombo. Pate Marakkar, Kunjali Marakkar and Ali Ibrahim Marakkar were the three leaders of the Calicut fleet. Pate Marakkar increased his force to 7,000 men by levying troops among the local population and gathered in provision for the ships. He was hopeful of the arrival of the Turks to attack the Portuguese fort at Diu and he calculated that the Turkish threat would detain Martin Affonso de Souza's fleet at Diu. Pate had high hopes that the Sultan of Gujarat and the other Indian rulers would take all the enemy forts and ships. Let me quote Father Ferroli (*The Jesuits in Malabar*, Bangalore Press, 1939, pp. 118-20):

> 'Martin Alphonso de Souza was patrolling the Malabar coast, when he heard that Pate Marakkar had eluded him and had reached the Fishery coast. Grimly he sailed Southwards. His first attempt to get at the enemy failed, bad weather preventing his heavy sailing ships to get Northwards on the east coast of Cape Comorin. With great difficulty, he reached Manapad by means of rowing boats. . . . But he had to return to Cochin to equip himself better for fight.
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> 'The Moslems attributed his departure to faint-heartedness and believed themselves quite safe. But on the 28th of January, 1538, de Souza, at the head of 300 soldiers in 22 row boats (with the crew and slaves 700 men), made for Vidulai. On the way he seized some boats of the Pate Marakkar's people who had been fishing pearls and he delivered them over to the vengeance of the inhabitants of Tuticorin. Before daybreak, on the 30th, he attacked the Moslems from the sea, and while these were hurrying on board their ships and the fight was raging on the shore, he landed with his main force east of Vedulai and fell on the flank of the Moslems. A terrible fight took place with varying fortunes on both sides. Most of the Portuguese were wounded, when one of their Malabar Captains got a splendid idea; he set the Mahomedan boats, which were still on the beach, on fire, so as to make flight impossible. On seeing their ships burning, the Moslems lost every hope of escape and ran landwards in wild panic. At 10 a.m. the battle was decided. 800 dead Moslems covered the battle field and the whole camp

with its rich booty fell into Protuguese hands. 400 cannon, 2,000 muskets and many other weapons, 22 war-paroes, and Pate Marakkar's gorgeous tent with the State parasol, a present of the Zamorin to Mayadunne. The Paravars took the rest of the booty, delivered their prisoners and gave back the captured ships to their owners. As retaliation for all they had suffered, they once more burnt down Kayalpatnam, which the Mahomedans had just built up.'

The victory of Vidulai was extolled in Portugal and indeed all over Europe. Of the three Calicut chiefs, Ali Ibrahim was killed and both Pachi and Kunjali lost all their treasures. To the Zamorin it was a severe blow.

Mayadunne once again became repentant and made quick peace with his brother who indeed did not desire to have the Portuguese on Sinhalese soil any longer than was necessary. De Souza had nothing more to do. Bhuvaneka Bahu gave the Portuguese 45,000 *crusados* towards the expenses of the fleet which was to be treated as a loan, but the Portuguese did not intend to repay the amount. Indeed they never paid.

The marriage of King Bhuvaneka Bahu's daughter with the prince Widiye Bandara which took place in 1538 blasted all hopes Mayadunne entertained regarding his succession to his brother's throne. The restless rebel began a new war. The Zamorin's eyes were not altogether taken away from the Island. The disaster of Vidulai only a year ago did not quite depress him. The Zamorin sent sixteen vessels from Ponnani under Pachi Marakkar and Kunjali Marakkar. When the captains received the orders of the king, they were asked to wipe out the disgrace of Vidulai. If they failed, they were not to return to his presence. From the very start a vague feeling of uneasiness disturbed the captains, for a Brahmin astrologer whose prophecies had always proved true, had foreseen a disastrous termination to the expedition.

Bhuvaneka Bahu sent to India for help but the appearance of the Turks before Diu prevented the Viceroy from diverting his forces to Ceylon. The Viceroy begged the king's forgiveness and promised to send succour as soon as he could. It was in March 1539 that he was in a position to send a token fleet under Ferriera who cruised in search of the Calicut ships.

At Manar he learnt that Pachi Marakkar and Kunjali had been seen making for Puttalam Bay. Pachi with the bulk of his men had proceeded overland to Sitawaka to meet Mayadunne and to assist him. He made a miscalculation, for he had not expected the arrival of a Portuguese fleet from India. The Turks, he had been assured, would take care of that. He had not counted upon the withdrawal of the grand fleet of the Turks so hastily.

Ferriera, in the meanwhile, hurriedly made his way to the Bay of Puttalam where he saw the Calicut vessels drawn upon the beach. The Portuguese attacked firing their cannon and under cover of the fire, Portuguese long boats, mounting swivels, darted towards the coast. The hastily constructed earth-works were overrun and a pitched battle followed in which the Portuguese were victorious. The rest of the Malabar crew escaped into the country and made haste to convey the news of the disaster to their leader. Kunjali, it is believed, fell in the battle on the shore.

The king gave a royal welcome to Ferriera on his arrival at Kotta after this victory. The Portuguese soldiers marched through the streets of Kotta attired in leather jerkins, shining breastplate and helmet. After the reception, the aged and vexed king poured out to Ferriera the bitterness of his heart, recounting the insults he had suffered at the hands of the Portuguese Factor, Pero Vas Travasso, a mean and small man. In a towering passion, he declared that he would rather lose his kingdom than tolerate the presence of such a man in his court. The Portuguese could go back, if they liked.

Ferriera had an audience with the king the next day. He demanded that the war against Mayadunne must be pressed home and that unless the rebel prince was captured, there would be no peace on the island. Ferriera stormed and raged and the king, quite overcome, yielded.

Three hundred Portuguese, 7,000 lascarines and 11,000 Sinhalese under Widiye Bandara marched on Sitawaka. The king sent a messenger, a Mudaliyar, to Mayadunne calling on him to surrender the Calicut captains together with their men. Mayadunne refused to do so. On hearing that the rebel prince had refused to surrender the Marakkars, Ferriera swore a mighty oath. "By Nazareth," he said, "I will burn the city and take Mayadunne on the banks of my vessel to Goa."

The Marakkars were in a dangerous situation. Previous experience had taught them not to put any great trust in Mayadunne. They kept a careful watch over the camp and the movement of messengers.

Mayadunne sent a messenger to Ferriera saying that it would bring great dishonour to a warrior to betray his allies who had taken shelter with him. He was prepared to come to a settlement with his brother, the king, and asked for two days' time. He sent a separate messenger to his brother with a personal appeal addressed to him. In the meanwhile the combined Portuguese and Sinhalese army drew near, and Mayadunne saw from the battlements of Sitawaka the forces ranged against him.

The two days passed. Mayadunne, assisted by the Malabars, made a last desperate bid for freedom.

A select band of Sitawaka soldiers was sent to make a midnight attack on the rear of the besieging forces. The attack was repelled by the Sinhalese prince, Widiye Bandara, who led his men with skill and valour. Pachi Marakkar and his followers made a simultaneous attack on the king and attempted to surprise the Portuguese. The king's sentinels were alert and the attack failed.

The next morning, the king called his council at which Ferriera and the Portuguese captains were also present. The king assured them that his brother Mayadunne was not responsible for the night attack, but that it was done by the Marakkar who was acting in desperation. Mayadunne had sent him an *ola* in which he swore "on his father's head" that he was not guilty of the attack and that he had severely punished those of his men who had accompanied the Marakkars.

Ferriera was seventy-five and the grey-haired veteran, ever hot-tempered, completely lost self-control. Fraternal affection was not to be allowed to snatch the victory, now that it was within grasp. He pointed out that both Mayadunne and the king were agreed that the Malabar seamen were responsible for the night attack, and demanded that Mayadunne should be asked to surrender the Calicut captains and their men forthwith. If he failed to do so, his city was to be destroyed. The ultimatum was sent. Soon after, reports came to the king's camp that the Moors had disappeared from Sitawaka. Ferriera was disappointed and enraged. He told the king that Mayadunne was hiding the Marakkars and that they would fall upon the king and destroy him. The king again summoned his council and issued an order to assault the city and put every inhabitant to the sword.

Mayadunne made one more effort to stave off the attack. He hoped that rich presents might change his brother's mind. He sent priceless jewels, the richest among his treasure gained through a long career of plunder. Correa estimates the value of a bracelet set with four rubies Mayadunne sent as a placatory gift to his brother at 80,000 *crusados*. He is also said to have sent his little four-year old son to soften the king's heart. Mayadunne sent his apologies and assurance of loyalty to the king, but the king was not appeased. Plans were put through for the assault on the city.

One morning a strange sight greeted the besiegers. A body of men was seen approaching the king's camp through one of the city gates. The Portuguese opened fire on them and killed several. It was then discovered that they were two hundred Paduwas, and that they were bringing the heads of the Malabar seamen and also those of their gallant commander. "Some say that they were done to death by the secret orders of Mayadunne, and others that they were killed by the villagers in consequence of their overbearing conduct towards them." There are different versions of this incident. At a distance of four centuries, we can only regret with P.E. Pieris, the great historian of Ceylon, who, after the narration of this incident, adds, "The truth will never be known".

This is not a place to record the sad history of Ceylon during the second half of the sixteenth century following the assumption of greater political control over the island by the Portuguese. Ceylon, however, continued to resist Portuguese encroachment on her politics, trade and religion.

The Zamorin did not send any more fleet to Ceylon. For nearly four decades he had fought the Portuguese on sea and land. His trade and treasury ruined, he was a broken man. He was in no mood for further adventures. He was old and ill. He died broken-hearted in the year 1540. He was a brave and resolute king and possessed a sense of dynastic dignity we see in none of his successors in the same indomitable degree. After his death peace was concluded with his successor on the 3rd April 1540.

SIXTEEN

The Indo-Egyptian Axis

WE HAVE already noticed the results of the successive naval expeditions sent out by the Egyptian Mamelukes and later, after their overthrow, by the Byzantine Turks against the Portuguese. These conflicts had their origin in commercial rivalries. Soon they developed the cruel intensities of a religious crusade. The Moslem world was, however, by no means united. Internal dissensions made its opposition to Portuguese ambition weak and ineffectual.

A sporadic war continued all the time on the Indian Ocean. In the course of the sixteenth century these naval conflicts gradually ceased to have the features of regular pitched naval battles fought out by two nations at war, and became, increasingly, acts of piracy and reprisals. On both sides there were adventurers who took to piracy with the connivance of their respective rulers. A Gujarati seaman, Koja Hazeem, in association with Premata Gundel, a Malayan, was active in the Gulf of Siam and preyed regularly on the Portuguese ships trading with the Far East. The damage these raiders caused was so serious that the Portuguese Captain of Malacca found it necessary to send a well-equipped expedition to suppress them. The seamen of Malabar fitted out war-paroes to fall upon the richly laden caravels voyaging between Goa and China. Portuguese colonialism was resented everywhere, and this resentment broke out in well-planned attacks on their factories and forts. A notable event during this period was the massacre of the Portuguese at Liampo by the Chinese who were provoked beyond endurance by the acts of robbery which were instigated by a Portuguese judge. More than a thousand Europeans were killed and over eighty ships were burnt. We learn also that the Portuguese Governor of Goa made an attempt to rob the temple of Tirupathi in South India, but the people around getting scent of this gathered together in such large numbers to defend their temple that the Portuguese were compelled to give up the attempt. The expedition was not a total failure, however, for the governor robbed a few small temples around Kael further south, and in some measure satisfied his greed.

These acts of robbery were not the isolated acts of erring individuals, but the deliberate policy of a predatory administration. The Portuguese, no doubt, had their reasons. One of them appears to be the low state of Goan finance. After the protracted siege of Diu, the treasury was empty. During the later stages of the war it had become necessary to raise a loan from the Goan citizens. It was after the lucky capture of a treasure ship of Cambay by Barreto that this debt was repaid. Gains from piracy were officially recognised as part of public finance. The damage inflicted on Portuguese trade and shipping from China to Aden was yet another reason why the Goan treasury was at a low ebb. Portuguese merchants resorted to corrupt practices to avoid payment of the harbour dues and the king's customs. The governors, who were appointed for a short period, usually of three years, aiming to retire on a competent fortune, amassed wealth at the expense of the State.

Lopo Vaz de Sampayo to whom goes the credit of one of the most successful robberies ever carried out in India—the raid on Purakkat temple by which an estimated loot of 1,000,000 gold pataks was gained—was succeeded by Nuno da Cunha in 1529. Nuno arrested Sampayo and sent him to Lisbon, where he was brought up for trial on a number of charges, found guilty and banished to that unfortunate continent—Africa. Nuno began his official career by sending out a fleet of fifty-one ships under Silveira to scour the Malabar coast. Another fleet was despatched north on a similar mission to Cambay and a third, of smaller strength, to the Red Sea. The Malabar fleet caused much damage along the coast, burning towns and destroying crops in surprise raids. After this exploit, the southern fleet sailed north. The combined fleet sailed up the Tapti river, and plundered towns and temples. Randa, Daman and Agashi, all undefended towns, shared the same fate. When the Portuguese landed at Chawl where there was an army of the Sultan of Gujarat, they got a hot reception. The Sultan's cavalry chased the raiders to the beach and obliged them to take to the sea. The Red Sea fleet was successful in its operations and concluded a treaty with Aden.

The nature and extent of Egyptian help received by Indian princes in their war against the Portuguese cannot be better illustrated than by the strange behaviour of Admiral Sulaiman Pasha who came out to assist the Sultan of Gujarat against the Portuguese. A brief account of this will be found later on. It does not appear that the

Indian allies of the Egyptians received any substantial help. On at least one occasion it is clear that the Indian allies sincerely regretted having asked for their help. The vaunted prowess of the foreign allies was not much in evidence when put to a test, and the demands that were made by them on the Indian princes were extravagant. The help, when it came, was unreliable and never timely.

The major event during the governorship of Nuno da Cunha was the grand but disastrous attack on Diu. In 1531 the Portuguese demanded a site at Diu for the erection of a fortress. The Governor of Diu ignored the demand and made hasty preparations for its defence. The Portuguese had one hundred sail of vessels of all description including transports. There were 3,600 Europeans, 8,000 Kaffirs and 2,500 Indians. Diu was defended gallantly by a Turk named Mustafa Khan Rumy. The Indian soldiers fought courageously and inflicted a crushing defeat on the enemy. There followed an inglorious retreat to Goa. The commander of a Portuguese squadron worked off his sense of frustration by falling on an unguarded coastal town and setting fire to it, and in some measure redeemed the glory of Portuguese colours.

The Portuguese needed a fort in the Zamorin's territory. After the destruction of the fort at Calicut, the Portuguese wished to gain a site at Chaliyam—a situation of strategic importance in the Zamorin's territory. The Portuguese bribed the Chief of Chaliyam. In spite of the Zamorin's warning the Chief of Chaliyam gave the Portuguese a site near the coast to build a fort—a work which was completed in the very short period of five months. The Zamorin was enraged by this act of treachery, but as he found himself enfeebled, he waited for a favourable opportunity to recapture Chaliyam. Sultan Bahadur of Gujarat, an ally of the Zamorin, had not sufficiently recovered his strength after the Portuguese siege of Diu, and could not be relied on to give him any effective help. The Zamorin had reports that the Sultan had despatched messengers with costly gifts to the Grand Turk asking for his assistance and there were widely current rumours of the arrival of another Turkish fleet. The Sultan's ambassadors had gone to Calicut too to ask the Zamorin to begin a war on the common enemy, but the Zamorin needed time to recover his initiative.

However, Sultan Bahadur did not live to carry out his plan. He was set upon treacherously by the Portuguese when returning from an interview with the Portuguese Captain, Manoel de Souza, who, pretending illness, had requested the Sultan to come on board his ship. A Portuguese soldier dropped a pike on his head when he was in the act of getting into the boat. In the fight that ensued Manoel de Souza was killed by one of the Sultan's attendants. This happened on the 3rd Ramzan 943 A.H (A.D. 1536-37).

After this Nuno da Cunha had to exert himself to the utmost to overcome the revulsion which his deed had aroused all over the country. He justified his act to the princes and the people of India. To allay their mistrust he accused Bahadur of being in league with the Turks. He brought witnesses, published letters and sent his envoys in all directions to justify the assassination and to prove that Bahadur richly deserved having a pike dropped on his head. Whatever restoration of confidence these steps might have achieved was set at naught by Nuno's subsequent action. He recognised the succession of Mir Mohammad Zaman to the throne of Gujarat. This man Zaman was "a robber who had plundered the queen mother of Delhi of over two million of gold".[1] Zaman had agreed to give a large part of the coastal territory of Gujarat to the Portuguese in return for Portuguese aid to establish him on the throne. This profitable arrangement, however, failed because Bahadur's nephew raised a mighty force and drove both the usurper and his friends from Diu.

The next considerable expedition which came out from Egypt was led by Sulaiman Pasha. On the 22nd January 1538, a large Egyptian force consisting of seventy ships and 7,000 men was despatched to India under the command of Sulaiman Pasha. The 80-year old Pasha was a barbarian, short, fat and ugly, requiring "four men to lift him to his feet". To equip the fleet he is said to have seized the property of several rich men of Cairo whom he cruelly put to death. During the voyage to India he committed a series of atrocities at every port of call. He put to death the rulers of Zalid and Aden after receiving rich presents at their hands. His crew fared no better. Out of the 2,000 Venetian Christians whom he had pressed into service, he killed 200 for resting on their oars. When the fleet came before Diu, Koja Zafar, the Governor of Diu, went to the Pasha and asked him to lend him some pieces of artillery for an attack on the Portuguese fortress. The Pasha kept Zafar engaged in talk and secretly despatched a body of troops to plunder the outskirts of the town. Zafar was so disgusted by the manners and motives of his Turkish ally that he resolved to send him away at the earliest opportunity. The Pasha bombarded the Portuguese fortress at Diu and sent out general plundering expeditions in which the principal victims were Indians. Zafar knew well that Sulaiman was a coward, and in order to hasten his departure, he spread the rumour of the imminent arrival of a powerful Portuguese fleet from Goa. In the meanwhile the Indian army fell out with the Turkish Janissaries. On the 2nd November, a Portuguese fleet appeared off Diu and the Pasha withdrew under cover of darkness. He was thirty miles away when the day broke. The Pasha gave out that he had conquered the whole of India and to make sure that the story would not be contradicted, he slew a Christian prisoner who, it seems, threatened to tell the truth.

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[1] Danvers, p. 421.

So hasty was the departure of the Pasha that he left a few of his vessels behind. One of his ships which he had sent out to plunder Mangalore was set upon by the soldiers of the Rani of Ullal and captured.

The failure of the Turkish expedition helped the Portuguese to secure for themselves a long period of peace. The Nizam Shah, Adil Khan and the Zamorin, the principal opponents of the Portuguese in India, came to terms with them and concluded formal treaties. The Zamorin sent Captain Kutti Ali to negotiate a treaty on his behalf to Goa where he arrived with a splendid retinue and was received with ceremonial honour. Thus at the close of 1540, the Portuguese, secure and at peace with the principal powers opposed to them in India, were at liberty to plunder in other directions.

Sultan Sulaiman the Magnificent's plan of the subjugation of the then existing Moslem East as the first step in the establishment of a world empire needed something more than a mere commercial interest in the Persian and Arabian Seas. His diplomacy had the ulterior object of taking Ormuz in order to get a spring-board for the conquest of India. This plan was not, however, destined to succeed as a result of the unwise expenditure of his resources in the Danubian provinces where his Janissaries overran both Hungary and Austria.

A powerful fleet and the high prestige he enjoyed would have proved a serious danger to the growing powers of the Moguls in India. Simultaneously with India the countries of Oxus received the Sultan's attention. As early as 1536 Bahadur Shah of Gujarat had sent his envoy to Sultan Sulaiman who was then at Adrianople to gain his help against Humayun Shah, but the force sent by the Sultan under Sulaiman Pasha reached India only after the death of Bahadur Shah. How the Turks fell out with their Indian ally and the manner of their departure, we have already seen.

Sulaiman Pasha who rose to Admiralty by killing Mir Hussain, the first notable Egyptian Admiral to come to India, was himself murdered by Pir Beg who succeeded him as commander of a naval expedition to India. Pir Beg was no braver than his predecessor. He set out in 1550 from Suez to Ormuz with thirty ships, galleys and bashtardas, but on seeing the Portuguese fleet he fled, leaving a great part of the fleet in the port of Busarah. The Sultan suspected bribery and beheaded Pir Beg and called upon Sidi Ali Reis to fetch back the Busarah fleet. Sidi Ali Reis' log-book bears witness to the leisurely and unwarlike voyage he undertook. In his book *Mirat ul Memalik* he gives an account of his pious peregrination. The holy sailor visited a total of thirty-six tombs of Moslem Fakirs and holy places. He tells us of a battle fought with the Portuguese in the Bay of Ormuz and how, when victory was within grasp, a storm drove his ships away from the enemy. Afterwards he entered the Indian Ocean. Again there was a storm; this one is named Fil-Zofani. He was "unable to set the sails, not even the trim guella (storm sails)". He waxes poetic over the storm which raged for ten days. Thereafter he drifted rather than sailed to Diu, "but for fear of the unbelievers", drew in sails further and continued his course.[1] He frequently consulted his horoscope. At Daman he interviewed the governor and the captain of a Calicut ship who said that they were waiting for Egyptian help. When the Turks heard that the Portuguese were on their way, a part of the crew jumped overboard and escaped to shore. Sidi did not undertake any war-like course in India and he made his tedious overland journey back home in November 1552, after selling the remnant of his battered fleet to such buyers as came forward. His sailors left him to seek service in Gujarat. After visiting more shrines and composing various chronograms and *ghazels* at the courts he visited, and having seen the wonder-bird Huma, this admiral reached Constantinople in 1556, after a long pedestrian journey of four years.

During the six decades of the Indo-Portuguese struggle Egyptian aid came to India in the three major expeditions already described. They failed to achieve any positive result. After Mir Hussain's first victory over the Portuguese fleet at Chawl, the Moslems had circulated, by ballads and reports, exaggerated accounts of Egyptian invincibility. But Mir Hussain's subsequent defeat and the conduct of the fleet which came out later greatly diminished the prestige of the ally in the estimation of the Indian princes.

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[1] **He took eight months to reach Diu.**

The conduct of the Egyptians in battle was none too valiant. Their leaders proved not only exacting but also treacherous, and made demands on the princes they came out to aid inconsistent with the nature and volume of help they afforded. It was well that no more expeditions were sent. Egyptian soldiers of fortune, however, continued sometimes to come out to serve in the armies of the Indian princes as mercenaries or brought supplies of war material. These came at uncertain intervals and in negligible quantities so that it may be safely said that after 1550, effective Egyptian aid in the Indo-Portuguese struggle ceased.

The activities of the Egyptian navy in the Mediterranean were, however, far more successful. Khairudin, popularly known as Barbarossa, was active in the Mediterranean and did great damage to Christian shipping and to the coastal towns. The Christian Admiral, Andrea Dorea, went out against him but did not achieve any notable success. The mercantile shipping in the Mediterranean was seriously hampered and the profitable movement of spices and eastern commodities from Lisbon to Venice was interrupted. When we look upon Khairudin's brilliant exploits against the world background of the international trade rivalry of the times, they appear only as attempts at the interception of the middleman-traffic in the retail trade in eastern commodities. The major battles and decisions of this struggle took place on the Indian Ocean.

The Indo-Egyptian axis checked Portuguese mastery of the Indian Ocean. The Indian end of the axis consisted of the princes whose trade interests were affected, namely the Zamorin, the Sultan of Cambay, Adil Shah and the minor chieftains of the Konkan and Kanara ports. At the Indian end of the axis there was to be seen from the beginning a lack of solidarity and unity of plan. The Rani of Ullal was opposed to the Portuguese, but a little way up, the rulers of Mangalore and Bhatkal made overtures for Portuguese friendship as and when it suited them. The king of Vijayanagar did not commit himself to a course of active opposition to the foreigners. Timoja, as we have seen, dedicated himself to Portuguese interests in return for such crumbs of advantage as he could pick. Adil Shah of the Deccan and the Sultan of Cambay proved to be not only powerless to check the inroads of the enemy but unsteady in their resolution. The reasons for their failure lay in two factors. First of all this war assumed the complexion of a religious conflict between the Moslems and the Christians in which the Hindu powers generally did not wish to take sides except as in the instance of the Zamorin, where there was a vivid recognition of the trade and dynastic interests involved. The Portuguese knew the pattern of dynastic and religious discord in the different parts of the country and adopted a policy which took advantage of it.

Persia, with its great port of Ormuz, was the middle of the axis. From the very beginning of Portuguese action in the Indian Ocean, the king of Ormuz played a defensive role counting upon support from India.

Persia had a difficult role to play. Ottoman political ambition aimed at the subjugation of Persia as a preliminary to the ultimate conquest of India. Persia had to guard herself against this grave danger on the one hand and ward off Portuguese attacks on the other. Internal dissension and political conspiracies made effective Persian military action difficult. Persia did not undertake war-like action away from home waters. Portuguese action was most successful and most speedily so in this sector. The middle of the axis was the first to give way.

The Cairo-end also proved a great disappointment to the Indian princes. There were then current in India the most exaggerated accounts of the might of the Grand Sultan and his formidable fleet. These reports, which were deliberately circulated by Egyptian and Arab merchants in order to enhance the prestige of their country and increase their influence, became very soon discredited, when the actual clash between the Portuguese and the Turks occurred. Even those Moslem princes who had set their hopes high on foreign aid were soon disillusioned, for we find that they were among the first to treat with the Portuguese for favourable terms. The Zamorin whose dynastic pride was supported by the reckless loyalty of his own subjects, sought only such material aid from Egypt as he could not manufacture in his own country. He was, on the whole, less dependent on Egypt and less hopeful of her active intervention. That is the reason why the Zamorin, on the whole, continued to remain a resolute opponent of the Portuguese and far more aggressively active.

As now, the Islamic world had then no political unity. The Sultan of Cairo was on bad terms with the Sheikh of Aden. He was engaged in serious dissensions with the Governor of Damascus and Aleppo. The commanders of the Egyptian expeditions to India exhausted their force in countless battles and skirmishes fought barbarously with the Sheikhs and chieftains on both sides of the Red Sea before they came up against the Portuguese and succumbed to their broadsides.

In 1513 when the Sheikh of Aden sent the Grand Sultan news of Portuguese penetration into the Red Sea, Cairo sent him no help. There was a revolt in Cairo when it was rumoured that the Christians were proceeding against Alexandria. Mutual conflict and jealousies were rife in the Moslem world and when the crisis came nearer home, the rifts widened.

Even in medieval times religious unity had remained a myth and had broken down when challenged by the material interests of trade and politics.

The Rajas of Cochin, Calicut and Cannanore were of the same faith, but where their economic interest and political ambitions were concerned, they took different roads. It was the same story with the Moslems. Religious conflicts, whether of the ancient or medieval days, will be found to have a basis in economic or political interests, and in our times in national interests as well.

There was little to be gained from this axis. The Zamorin recognised this early. The Moslem princes of Gujarat and Deccan, though quick to temporise, still had a lingering hope of aid from the Moslem world. The Porte was to the Moslem world what the Prete was to the Christian world, a symbol, at once unifying and stimulating. It was a symbol to which the imagination of religious-culture lent a self-assuring aura of magnificence which lay on it like the sun-set glow—a symbol that we come across in the history of every culture in periods of emotional challenge, and it is through this symbol that a culture seeks its survival. But the Moslem world was a house divided against itself and the axis soon broke asunder.

However hurting it may be to our sense of national unity which has been largely a development of the last half a century, we cannot but admit that there was no national consciousness among our people when the Portuguese came to our land. The people obeyed their chief and they were under obligation to shed their blood in the chief's cause, whether it was for or against their own country and faith. By all evidence, our men, whether mustered by their chief or hired as mercenaries to fight for a foreign power, fought heroically. From Pacheco's defence of Cochin to Clive's defence of Arcot, it is the same story of hired heroism. Year after year, Indians, whether converts to Christianity or adherents of their own faith, were entertained in ever increasing numbers in the army of the Portuguese. The troops of Timoja, the Nayars of Cochin, the Konkans and the seafaring Moslems, served the Portuguese commanders both in their Indian and foreign wars. When Albuquerque entered Goa in March 1510, he was accompanied by a body of large Portuguese and 200 Malabarese. The fleet which attacked Cape Guardafui in 1513 carried 830 Malabarese and Canarese in addition to the Portuguese soldiers. The Portuguese employed Indian galley slaves and 600 archers when they set out for Ormuz in 1515. Lopo Soarez had 800 sailors and 800 soldiers of India when he proceeded on his expedition to the Red Sea in 1516. In the attack on Diu in 1530 Nuno da Cunha was assisted by 2,000 Malabarese and Canarese, 8,000 slaves and nearly 5,000 native seamen. In our days of strong nationalism, this conduct of our forebears no doubt, appears unpatriotic, but, as has been pointed out, there was no question of patriotism then. The discipline of those days demanded of the soldier an implicit obedience to the king, whoever he was at the moment, and if the king sent him on sacrilegious or fratricidal missions, he had to go.

It would, however, console us in some measure to know that many Portuguese soldiers turned renegades. Whenever they were caught they were ruthlessly punished by the Portuguese, often by having their arms, ears and noses cut off. In several of their treaties with the Indian princes the Portuguese made it one of the terms that the renegades should be surrendered. Notwithstanding the terrors of punishment, there were numerous instances of Portuguese soldiers of adventure deserting their army and going over to the enemy where they were honourably received and lavishly entertained. The Indian princes paid them better.

SEVENTEEN

The Doom of the Dons

THE DECLINE of Portuguese power in India began about the middle of the sixteenth century. Portuguese conduct, notably the ravages of Don Juan de Castro along the coast of Gujarat and Konkan where "he spared neither a living creature, vegetable, nor dwelling of any kind", estranged such of the Indian princes as had remained friendly. Towards the close of the century Goa had no friend on the peninsula; on the sea there had begun to appear during the last two decades of the century the ships of the English and the Dutch, deadly rivals in trade and sworn enemies in religion. The passage to India, a jealously guarded secret, was now open to all.

The fall of the great Empire of Vijayanagar in 1565 affected Goan trade so adversely that there was a fresh out-break of piracy which, if not officially sanctioned, was not infrequently connived at by the Viceroy as revealed by the notorious Mesquito affair. Captain Mesquito, described by Portuguese historians as "a man of no conscience", was commissioned by the Viceroy to commit piracy along the coast. It was a cruel cruise. The captives of nearly twenty-four ships which he is said to have seized were either beheaded or sewn up in sails and thrown overboard so that none might survive to tell the tale. These acts were done when the Portuguese were officially at peace with the Indian princes. Portuguese historians who are apt to overestimate the prowess of their heroes, give the number of Mesquito's victims as 2,000. The Zamorin sent his ambassador to Goa to complain to the Governor, Juan de Mendoca, who declared Mesquito a rebel and promised to punish him. When the ambassador was still with him, Mesquito walked in unaware of what was going on. Mendoca, a histrionic genius, flew into a rage and ordered Mesquito to be seized and flung into a dungeon, but as soon as the ambassador turned his back, he had the pirate released and rewarded.

This is one of the several incidents illustrative of the degeneracy of Portuguese morals and character. With the death of King João III in 1558, their luck began to wane. The first half of the century was bright with the exploits of Portugal's brave sons. That period was over. When Louis de Camoens, the poet, came to India in 1552, the heroic glory of Portuguese Asia, which *The Lusiad* passionately recaptures, was already a thing of the past. In his poetic imagination, quickened by a sense of national glory, those early decades seemed filled with men of heroic dimensions intent on epic enterprise. Perhaps the poet's own misfortunes forced him to seek an escape into the grand days of old. The national dishonour and the decay of morals which he saw around him and which he brooded over in the loneliness of his prison could be set right only by the inspiring remembrance of the age of heroes. A person far greater than Camoens, St. Francis Xavier, who came to India in 1542, fought his sternest battles against the moral decay of the Portuguese, their dishonesty and avarice. In 1550 the Saint, "perceiving how many good enterprises were spoilt through the malice and jealousy of the Governor, wrote a letter to the King in which he pointed out the evils arising therefrom and recommended to His Majesty to meet such action with severe punishment. This letter was, however, ignored as a good many others had been".[1] It is a matter of common knowledge that the Saint left India for Ceylon in 1551 in utter disgust promising never to set foot here again. A year later the year in which Camoens came to India, the Saint died.

After the death of the Saint, the fall of the Portuguese gathered momentum. The heroic and reckless spirit of adventure of the pioneers departed and in its place we find a debased nature, cruel and greedy of plunder. In the year 1560 the Inquisition came over to India and began a dark and horrible chapter. Primarily a machinery for the persecution of the Jews, it developed into a tyranny which deprived Christianity of the attractiveness of meekness, charity and grace.

When Pedro de Baretto massacred the inhabitants of Tatta in a night raid he had at least the justification that "he took the richest booty ever taken in Asia". When Durate de Eca submitted the king of Ternate and his family to a species of indignity so disgusting that his own soldiers revolted and released the royal family, there was no question of national or personal gain. In the final stages of the siege of Kotta by Raja Simha, when Pedro de Ataide selected 400 of the fattest "corpses to be salted and preserved", he had the necessity of hunger. Besides, Portuguese

[1] Danvers, *The Portuguese in India.*

historians tell us that this ghoulish food was not eaten as the Portuguese abandoned Kotta in favour of Colombo. Towards the end of the century we meet the most debased sadist known to history, Azvedo, who, we are told, used to force mothers to pound their babies in a mortar for the satisfaction of hearing them scream. The victims, the people of Galle in Ceylon, provided him with an opportunity to display his genius for punning on the word. The scream of the babies, we are told, resembled the cry of a fowl, called *Galle* in the Portuguese language.

These acts can be justified by no human motive however debased. Then there was Bishop Menezes leading a solemn procession round a bonfire in Goa which consumed the religious books of the Christian sect of Mar Thoma of Cochin whom he had overawed into submission. This was in 1599.

In the year 1564 when Mesquito was active along the coast in the manner described, the dead body of a Mopla sailor of Cannanore was washed ashore. His young widow took up the body and proceeding to the town stirred up the people to revenge. Led by Ali Raja, a large army of Hindus and Moslems besieged the fort, overwhelmed the coastal defences and succeeded in destroying thirty ships. The Zamorin sent his admiral, Kunjali, with a fleet to Bhatkal to cut off reinforcement from Goa. Paulo de Lima was sent from Goa with a well-armed fleet for the relief of Cannanore. Kunjali came upon him with seven paroes. "After the usual salutes with their respective cannon, Kunjali with three of his ships attacked and boarded Don Paulo's vessel and obliged him to return to Goa." Kunjali had grand knightly manners and he disdained to take the enemy at a disadvantage.[1]

After Lima's defeat, Goa sent a bigger fleet under Don Mascarenhas against Kunjali. As it sailed down the coast, Kunjali fell upon the ships in the rear with only three paroes and "succeeded in doing great damage". Yet another fleet was sent commanded by Luiz de Mello. Off Mangalore, the captain was tempted by a richly laden ship of Cannanore. The whole fleet attacked the ship, but the gallant captain fought a splendid action and obliged De

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[1] Portuguese historians have not failed to observe this. The Kunjali mentioned here is Kunjali III, the third admiral of the famous dynasty. He was also called Pate Marakkar, the warrior admiral.

Mello to retire. De Mello having forgotten his mission did nothing to relieve Cannanore and spent his time in unsuccessful raids on Mangalore and Ullal—an act which brought upon him a fleet of thirteen Calicut ships. The fleet chased De Mello and brought him to an engagement in which he was defeated. He retired to Goa where he was imprisoned for refusing to help the Cannanore garrison. Portuguese ships, as noticed by Caesar Frederick, were afraid to sail "except under a convoy of big ships". In 1566 the war ended, the Portuguese suing for peace, and the prestige of Ali Raja of Cannanore and Kunjali rose in consequence. The success of Kunjali inspired several petty chieftains of the coast to fit out hundreds of small ships which cruised along the coast setting upon the Portuguese whenever fortune favoured them.

This increase in what the Portuguese describe as piratical activities is noted by Sheikh Zeinuddin. It is in fact an interesting phase in the development of our national spirit, for these war-like efforts came to be undertaken generally by the people and the princes whose trade and political interests the Portuguese had usurped. It was fast assuming the character of a national war for the recovery of India's sea-trade and less of a war fought for the preservation of mere dynastic interests. The Sheikh describes this rising of the people:

> 'The inhabitants of Badfutan, Turkoz and Fandereah and other towns, who having equipped certain small Gharubs and armed themselves with weapons of defence sailed out to sea, carrying with them no passes of the Franks, but being resolved upon resistance.... About the middle of the month of Ramzan 974 A.H. (1564 A.D.) the inhabitants of Funam and Fandereah, accompanied by others, having sailed in a fleet of 12 grabs, captured a carroka belonging to the Franks which had arrived from Bengal.... Furthermore, in the year 976 A.H. (1566 A.D.) another party of the same people... sailed out in a fleet of 17 grabs (among the party being Kutti Pokker) and made capture at Shaliat (Chaliyam) of a large carroka, having on board nearly 1,000 Franks, many of them approved veterans.'

In this action the Portuguese lost a hundred of their fighting men besides men of rank and a large number that was drowned.

Indian sailors sailing out in all directions from Kael took twenty-two vessels of the Portuguese. In 1569 Captain Kutti Pokker of Kunjali's fleet stole into the port of Mangalore with only six garubs, set fire to the warehouse and returned safe capturing one of the enemy ships. In this brilliant exploit "he made good his passage without losing a single ship".

These incidents illustrate the firm determination of the Indian people to drive out the Portuguese—a resolve which, in the year 1570, took the final shape of a great confederation. The Zamorin, Adil Khan of Bijapur and Nizam Shah of Ahmednagar made preparations for war. The anticipated conquests were divided beforehand. The Asian nature of this grand alliance is revealed by the fact that the king of Acheen was a party to the pact. Accordingly, in the year 1570, Adil Khan besieged Goa and the Nizam invested Chawl. Other minor chieftains too attacked the Portuguese. The queen of Gersoppa attacked Honavar, then in the hands of the foreigners.

A part of the Zamorin's navy—a fleet of twenty-one ships with 1,000 soldiers armed with match-locks—under the command of Captain Kutti Pokker sailed to Chawl to assist Nizam-ul-Mulk. A formidable Portuguese fleet lay before the harbour guarding the entrance. The captain performed an incredible feat. Undaunted, he sailed into the harbour under cover of night, and landed men and supplies. This amazing man stayed in the harbour for twenty days, fought a bitter, if unsuccessful, engagement with Lionel De Souza's squadron and after doing what damage he could, stole away one night "as fortunately as he had got in". De Menezes was then cruising along the Malabar coast with a powerful fleet of fifty galliots. Off Cannanore Kutti Pokker fell in with this fleet. In the engagement he fell fighting bravely and his fleet was destroyed.

In the meanwhile the Zamorin besieged the fort at Chaliyam, and the Portuguese garrison was in sore straits. De Menezes made several futile attempts to succour the fort. At last George de Castro, the 80-year old captain, surrendered the fort. The Zamorin allowed the men and women to embark without molestation. De Castro was subsequently executed in the market place at Goa for the surrender of Chaliyam. The king of Acheen began action against Malacca late in October 1571. The Portuguese won a victory over the Acheen fleet. The siege of Malacca was carried on vigorously but when the city was about to fall, the king, dispirited by his heavy losses, raised the siege and withdrew. Thus ended the grand alliance.

It failed to oust the Portuguese from Indian soil, but it checked Portuguese plans of political aggrandisement. Thereafter, they confined their attention to mercantile navigation. In order to secure this, Goa found it necessary to send fleet after fleet to the Malabar and the Coromondal coasts.

The luck of the Portuguese waned further during the reign of both Cardinal Henrique and King Phillip who was crowned in 1581.[1] English pirates were busy at this time and captured or destroyed home-bound Spanish treasure-ships returning from South America.[2] The exploits of Drake from the Caribbean to Cadiz and the disaster of the Armada in 1588 crippled the sea power of the Iberian nations. Holland having declared her independence, the Dutch began their fateful voyages to India. In the Bay of Bengal the Prince of Pegu had a fleet of 1,300 ships ready to curb Portuguese ambition in that direction. The Prince of Ternate avenged his father's murder and succeeded in driving the foreigners out of his country.

In 1577 the Portuguese captured fifty rice-ships belonging to the Kanara ports in violation of the treaty and war broke out on the Indian Ocean. Captain Kutty Moosa, cousin of the new Calicut Admiral, Pate Marakkar, was in complete mastery along the Coromondal coast while the admiral began a successful offensive against Portuguese shipping from Dabul to Cape Comorin.

In 1584 the Portuguese made enemies even in Cochin by forcing the Raja to assign to them the management of the custom house—an act which roused the people to a revolt so effective that the Portuguese were compelled to appoint a commission which ordered the suspension of the collection. It was not enough any longer to have dealings with the king, but there had emerged a new factor, the people, to reckon with. When the people discovered their rights and learnt to exercise their power of sanctions, there began the slow dissolution of the feudal order.

The vessels of other European nations appeared on the sea. Ralph Fitch was in Calicut in 1588. Cornelius Van Nec came out to India with eight ships in 1597. The end of Portuguese navigation was near. These European rivals gave Indian seamen every help to fight the Portuguese.

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[1] Phillip II of Spain was crowned Phillip I of Portugal.

[2] As early as 1581 Spanish ships bound for India were attacked by the English. Queen Elizabeth, we learn, took the lion's share of the booty. Spanish Government had to issue instruction to the ship's captains giving a change of route.

Admiral Pate Marakkar's activities and the general action begun by the Konkan seamen alarmed Goa. Acts of reprisals were ineffective. Taking advantage of the weakness of the Zamorin then on the throne, the Portuguese began negotiations to secure a site at Ponnani to build a fortress to serve their interests.

The Calicut Admiral warned the king of the dangers, but the king wavered. To mend the ruin to which the concession would expose the admiral's naval strategy, he asked the king's permission to build a fort on a square peninsula at the mouth of the Kotta river, a little distance to the north of Calicut. The Zamorin granted the permission. Soon after, the Portuguese wrung from the Zamorin permission to build a fort at Ponnani. The Calicut Admiral was thus able to build an alternative base and repair thither before the Portuguese fort was erected at Ponnani. It was well that Kotta was built for it was the admiral's reply to Ponnani. The wise admiral foresaw the course of events and took such precaution as he could.

The fort at Kotta was strong.

> 'On the land side was a deep ditch with a double wall about 7 feet thick flanked at regular distances with towers . . . mounted with cannon. Between the two creeks . . . he built a strong wall with two towers to secure the town and lined the sea-shore with pallisados, flanked by bastions, one of which higher than the other was mounted with heavy cannon to defend the entrance of the harbour which was further secured by a boom of masts strongly chained together.'

From this stronghold "he began to make war on us," complains De Couto, "taking many of our ships richly laden".

Two years after the building of the fort, Pate Marakkar died with a heavy heart filled with a foreboding of the end of all the great work his illustrious dynasty had done for the king and the country. His nephew, Mohamad Kunjali Marakkar IV, suceeded Pate Marakkar to the chieftaincy of Kotta. A few years after the building of the Ponnani fort in 1586, he began a mighty offensive. He sent Kutty Moosa with fourteen ships to the Coromondal coast where he took several Portuguese ships. The Viceroy hastily equipped twenty fustas and sent Don Andre Furtado de Mendoza to meet him. Furtado came upon the Indian fleet near the Island of Cardiva. The Marakkar's fleet consisted of twenty-two galliots, his own being of thirty-three banks with a beak of bronze. The Indian fleet hurried to meet the enemy, but was thrown into confusion by some of the vessels running on the shallows. Furtado steered straight on them, his guns causing much damage and grappled with their vessels. The Indian sailors fought bravely but the Portuguese proved stronger. Kutty Moosa was compelled to throw himself into the water, his sword between his teeth, and he escaped with some of his men while the rest surrendered. After this exploit Furtado landed at Manar and rendered thanks for the victory. Soon after, he won another victory off the mouth of the Cadiga river where he defeated another Calicut fleet and took a large booty.

Mohamad Kunjali Marakkar operating along the west coast made certain notable captures and for a while paralysed Portuguese shipping. The Viceroy who had inklings from Calicut that the Zamorin and the Marakkar were not on the best of terms sent Alvaro de Abranches to Calicut to conclude a treaty of peace. Kunjali had grown indifferent to the Zamorin. The bonds of the old feudal order had become loose. The old principalities were breaking into fragments and there had emerged a new aristocracy wielding its influence in the newly risen towns which dotted the littoral.[1] The Zamorin estranged, Kunjali acted on his own.[2] He took measures to protect himself both against the Zamorin and the Portuguese and strengthened the fortification of Kotta. He supported the Rani of Ullal when she rose against the Portuguese. In April 1592 he captured a treasure-ship from China almost within sight of Goa. The Portuguese determined to do everything in their power to suppress the rebel.

Kunjali had become a source of danger even to his neighbours. He violated the honour of a noble lady, wife of a lord whose land lay close to Kotta.[3] In his pride and arrogance he conducted himself like a tyrant, making many enemies. The close of the century was fateful to him. Kunjali styled himself king of Kotta. This brought about the end of Kotta and his own end as well.

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[1] Pate Marakkar's town Puthu Pattanam (new town) was itself one of these new marts.

[2] Sri Krishna Iyer states in a letter to me that there was a succession dispute between Mohamad and his cousin, the Zamorin favouring the claims of the latter.

[3] In the northern ballads there is a song about an encounter between Othenan, the Robin Hood of Malabar, and Kunjali Marakkar. Othenan protected a girl against the unwelcome attentions of Kunjali. It is not clear whether this story relates to the last of the Kunjalis.

EIGHTEEN

Fall of Kotta

FRANCISCO DA GAMA, Conde de Vidigueria, grandson of the discoverer of the sea route to India, arrived at Goa on the 22nd May 1597. He was the sixteenth Viceroy and the youngest appointed to that office.[1] Haughty and unwise, he was from the start, unpopular. When he attended church, he would remain concealed behind a curtain[2] to preserve, as he thought, a proper distance from the common people. He was cold and severe to his official subordinates. Portuguese affairs had gone from bad to worse during the lax administration of da Gama's predecessor, Mathaias de Albuquerque, a weak and simple governor, "who could not believe any man capable of lying"[3] in a period when most men did nothing else, and a check was indeed necessary. But the new Viceroy, wishing to be understood as a strict ruler, went to the other extreme. The most important task of the new Viceroy was to prepare for an attack on Kunjali which had been decided upon already. Accordingly, a powerful armada was fitted out which was meant to cooperate with the Zamorin's land forces. The Viceroy appealed to the public for help to fit out an expedition against the city's most dreaded enemy. The rich merchants of the city subscribed ten ships to add to the fleet.[4] Felons rotting in the Tronco received free pardon and were released to join the muster. Every able-bodied man was needed, every desparado was welcome.

The Viceroy appointed his younger brother, Louis da Gama, a young and handsome man of thirty, as the commander against the wishes of the veterans, and much to the chagrin of the captains. The Viceroy and the commander were both unfortunate in the selection, "the one in choosing; the other in being chosen".[5]

The fleet started at an inauspicious moment. When Louis da Gama was about to set sail, news came to Goa of the fateful appearance in Indian waters of the Dutch—"the scourge of the Portuguese pride and covetousness". Two ships of Holland were reported to have done some damage "to the Portuguese along the coast of Malabar and other places. This happened within four months of the arrival of the new Viceroy. Soon after, another great disaster was reported from Jacquette in the north."[1] Captain Simon de Abrew de Mello sailing to the north on the routine task of plundering Indian shipping was set upon by eight armed paroes of Kunjali's seamen. In the bitter fight which followed, the Indian seamen boarded the vessel and slew the Portuguese to a man. There was news of yet another disaster. The ship in which the Viceroy arrived in India, when about to return laden with rich merchandise, caught fire by accident, so it is stated, and sank off Cochin.[2] The Viceroy ordered a squadron of eight ships to the north of Jacquette on an avenging mission. Another squadron was despatched in all haste to protect Portuguese interests in Malacca and the islands which Goa correctly guessed to be the objective of the Dutch expedition.[3]

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[1] He was thirty-one years of age.

[2] Both Faria Y Souza and De Couto admit his unpopularity (Pyrard, Vol. II, Part II, p. 512).

[3] Pyrard, Vol. II, Part II, p. 512.

[4] Faria, *Asia Portuguese*, Book III, p. 101.

[5] Faria, Part II, Chapter I, p. 93.

The departure of Louis da Gama's fleet was consequently delayed. With his fleet diminished in strength to the extent of these two squadrons detached, he finally set sail for Calicut on the 13th November 1597, an unlucky date, for he was obliged to return to Goa in less than six months, accomplishing nothing. He had several conferences with the Zamorin—tedious negotiations which bore no fruit.

The ruler of Calicut was in a dilemma. If he joined hands with the Portuguese to punish Kunjali, he would be placing himself in the power of the Portuguese besides alienating some of his own restless vassals who were secretly in sympathy with the rebel admiral. A large section of his own subjects, both Moslem and Hindu, held the Marakkar family in great respect and glorified Kunjali as a national hero. Kunjali had adherents even among the Nayar barons of the coast. "With gifts of money he had bound to himself several Rajas, and he infested the seas and all the Malabar coast so that he became formidable to the Zamorin himself who desired to curb him, but mistrusted his own strength."[4] Declaration of

[1] Identified as the place where the temple of Dwaraka now stands at the extreme west horn of the Kathiawad Peninsula—Danvers.

[2] The Portuguese had strict fire regulations on board the ships. (See Pyrard.) This was probably the work of enemy incendiaries.

[3] Faria. The Dutch struck at the farthest and the weakest part of the Portuguese link of coastal fortresses stretching from Ormuz to Malacca.

[4] *Litterae Annuae* of the Society of Jesus, 1597.

war against Kunjali might lead to an open revolt by the northern vassals whose loyalty to the suzerain had of late been on the wane.

Besides, there was the Raja of Cochin, ever a giddy neighbour, unvanquished in spite of a hundred years' war. Cochin still cherished her hope of a conquest of Kerala with the help of the Portuguese. The Zamorin could not afford to estrange his northern lords.

On the seas there had appeared in recent times a new power the extent of which the Zamorin had no means of ascertaining—the Dutch. He knew that the Dutch and the Portuguese were bitter enemies and reports had come to him that the Dutch had worsted the latter in several engagements. There were possibilities for new alliances in the situation.

Whether the Zamorin wished to back out of his engagement with the Portuguese or whether he wished to get an advantage over the Portuguese, who were keen on the speedy destruction of Kunjali, cannot be stated assuredly, but he sought to better the terms previously made. The demands he now put forth—30,000 patacos, some companies of Portuguese soldiers and half the spoils—seem to indicate that he was not over anxious to launch a war against his admiral. Louis da Gama reported the new terms to Goa. The Viceroy deemed them inadmissible. The Zamorin's good faith was suspected and he was declared an enemy. A vigorous blockade of the coast was ordered. The admiral returned to Goa in April 1598 leaving a blockading fleet under the command of Don Ferdinand de Noronha who was ordered to lie before the mouth of the Kotta river to deny reinforcement to Kunjali.

Kunjali could not have been indifferent to the proceedings at Calicut. It was clear from the beginning that the Zamorin's diplomacy aimed at overawing Kunjali to obedience by the threat of a Portuguese alliance. Force of circumstance was favourable to a reconciliation between them, but the pride of an ancient dynasty and the arrogance of a brave but upstart vassal kept both apart. The Zamorin waited for a token of contrition, an act of submission, but the rebel admiral was obdurate. Kunjali, convinced of his invincibility, believed the flattery of his admirers. He resolved to offend His Majesty. An elephant belonging to the royal stables was then in the neighbourhood of Kotta. Kunjali had its tail cut off in spite of the entreaties of the mahout, as an insult to the Zamorin. He committed other acts of enormity. He raided the house of the

Nayar lord of Ariole,[1] his close but unfriendly neighbour who was a friend of the Portuguese and obedient to the Zamorin. The barbarities he committed on this Nayar and his lady estranged a powerful section of his Hindu neighbours who were now resolved to crush him.

At this time, there was a Jesuit, Antonio, at Calicut, who appears to have been placed in some sort of a confinement as a danger to the city. He possessed great tact and personal charm and won the love and regard of the king with whom he used to have frequent conferences. Padre Antonio took full advantage of the Ariole incident and whetted the king's anger against Kunjali. He prevailed upon the young king to reopen negotiations with Goa. The Zamorin offered the Viceroy the active aid of his land forces in a war on the rebel. The Viceroy despatched at once a fleet of twelve more ships to Kotta to supplement the blockading squadron. Once again preparations went on briskly at Goa. Six boats[2] specially adapted for work on the Kotta river were constructed at Bassein to reinforce his fleet. The Zamorin got ready an army of 20,000 Nayars[3] and marched on Kotta where he deployed his troops in a huge semi-circle stretching from Iringal to the sea-shore, cutting off all communication between the fort and the mainland.

Louis da Gama set sail again in December, the shore battery firing a salute to speed him on his way. The fleet consisting of three galleys, twenty fustas and six Bassein boats carried over 1,500 men on board and joined the fleet of eighteen ships already stationed off Kotta. The blockade was maintained vigorously while the details of the attack were being settled. Bishop Menezes who was on his way to Cochin called at Kotta.[4] A Council of Captains met in January in the presence of the Bishop and decided to attack the fort from the river by means of boats. It was agreed to have the ships drawn up in a line with their stems to the shore so that they might cover the men who attacked the fort. This resolution was communicated to Goa, and it received the Viceroy's approval. The Archbishop on reaching Cochin despatched four more vessels to Kotta to assist the fleet.

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[1] The word is obviously the Portuguese corruption of the word Adiodi, an honorofic title still in use in those areas.

[2] These were landing crafts of shallow draught. Bassein was a ship building port.

[3] Portuguese figures are generally not reliable where relative strength of the enemy is concerned.

[4] The Bishop was on his celebrated mission to bring the Christians of Travancore to the Church of Rome.

The Raja of Cochin was alarmed. He feared that the close alliance between the Zamorin and the Portuguese "might entirely unite them" to his disadvantage and promptly thought of a stratagem. "He gave out that the Zamorin, in secret league with Kunjali, planned to cut off all the Portuguese at one stroke when they should be deepest engaged in the assault."[1] To lend colour to this he proceeded to attack a territory adjoining Cochin which belonged to a chief under the Zamorin. He calculated that the Zamorin would be compelled to withdraw a portion of his army to meet this attack and that he would be able to convince the Portuguese of the fickleness of the Zamorin's friendship. Bishop Menezes investigated the charge and being convinced that it was the outcome of the Raja's "politic jealousy" he advised Louis da Gama not to give any credence to the story, but to carry on the war. The diplomatic prelate kept the Raja of Cochin in good humour and prevailed upon him to desist from attacking his neighbour.

The preparation for the siege went on for three months and it was decided to attack the fort on the 5th March 1599.

The Calicut army was encamped on the landward side of the Kotta peninsula. Off the mouth of the river, the Portuguese vessels formed a cordon. On the 3rd March, Belchior Ferreira was sent with 300 picked men to join the Zamorin's army. Louis de Silva, an experienced captain with 600 soldados, got ready to deliver the main assault on the river front. The next day, preparations were completed and the day was spent in confession by the Portuguese.

Kunjali correctly anticipated the direction of the main attack. The presence of the six Bassein boats was a threat to his scheme of defence which had not taken into account the possibility of an attack along the northern river front. In the fort he had provision and ammunition for the 1,500 chosen musketeers who defended the fort. The passage across the river from the northern bank was guarded by a system of stakes and the fort guns were trained to sweep the river.

Kunjali had a serious disadvantage from the start. He was not in a position to use his fleet. His ships, mostly light craft, had no chance in pitched battles against heavy ships in confined space. A large part of his vessels was scattered on the high seas on specific assignments. With the Portuguese watching the river mouth there was no means of summoning them to Kotta. With the utmost difficulty Kunjali was able to add a line of galliots on the edge of the water under the fort to meet any sea-borne attack that might be delivered from the west. The galliots commanded by Captain Kutti Amu bravely ran the blockade and stationed themselves at their posts of duty, capturing a Portuguese vessel in the action.

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[1] Pyrard, *Travels etc.*, Appendix *The Great Malabar Corsair.*

At this stage several Portuguese captains entertained doubts about the success of the plan of attack which had been agreed upon and sought an interview with the commander to alter the plan. The original plan was given up. The troops were to proceed from the Ariole side by land and thence to cross by means of jangadas to the northern side under the fort wall.

The Zamorin had taken up ground for his army on the landward side. This task he completed by the 3rd March, the Portuguese opening a lively fire on the fort to prevent the besieged from interfering with him. As soon as he was ready, he began to batter the town. He desired to have the assistance of a company of Portuguese and applied to Don Louis, who being suspicious, demanded hostages. It was an outrageous demand from a sworn ally. The Zamorin suppressed his resentment and sent six principal men including the Princes of Tanore, Chale and Caranoul and the Chief Judge of the kingdom.

The Portuguese sent Belchior Ferreira with 300 men to the Zamorin. On the night of the 3rd March 600 Portuguese led by Louis de Silva and Major D. Antony de Leyva made a successful landing.

The Portuguese appear to have been filled with forebodings of disaster. On that night "a meteor was seen in the sky which running along swiftly at last vanished in sparks". This was deemed of evil presage to the allies but we have no means of ascertaining what the besieged thought of it.

It had been arranged to give a fire signal, a burning lance, from the top of the Iringal rock shortly before dawn when the combined attack was to be launched both by land and sea. The Portuguese attack was delivered long before the appointed time. Belchior Calaca gave the signal shortly after midnight, five hours too early. Belchior Calaca thus appears as the scapegoat on whom the disaster which overtook the Portuguese could be blamed. He ran along the ridge of the Iringal rock with his burning lance. Ferreira, with 600 Portuguese and 500 Nayars drawn from the Zamorin's army, had been waiting for the signal. He rushed to the attack on seeing it. The Portuguese account, however, does not tell us why they did not carry "the scaling ladders and other engineering implements" with them so necessary for the escalade that had been planned. From all accounts it appears that the Portuguese were surprised and thrown into utter confusion by their own signal.

Louis de Silva with 600 men was to cross the river on jangadas at the creek of Balycupe, land at the foot of the walls, extend and join forces with Belchior Ferreira. According to Faria's apologetic account, Louis de Silva did not make any move though he saw the fire signal and strictly adhered to the plan of the dawn attack originally decided upon. If this had actually been the case, Ferreira would have received the full fury of the undiverted fire of the besiegers while he waited for over four long and disastrous hours at the foot of the southern wall. From another account we learn that among the first to fall was the gallant leader Louis de Silva himself, who had hardly set foot on land "when he was shot through the head", and that the heavier casualty was suffered not by Ferreira's party but by the landing party led by de Silva.

Kunjali directed his fire with skill. De Silva fell and two other commanders who succeeded him, De Francis Peryera and Major Leyva, shared his fate. The Portuguese were unable to get into formation. Antonio Dias, the Ensign, attempted "to conceal the death of Louis de Silva by stripping the colour off the staff and covering him therewith". Their leader and colour gone, the Portuguese were unable to rally, and for a while fought distractedly in separate parties. Some retreated to the boats in a panic. The overcrowded boats capsized and many were drowned. A few saved themselves by swimming across the river or down to the fleet. The rest fought bravely "performing incredible feats of valour" as was the Portuguese custom in such straits, and perished in large numbers. A Capuchin, F. Francis Baptista, who had accompanied the army "held up a crucifix to rally the men till it was shot to pieces by a musket shot which took his life too". The same fate befell Luis Cordoso "who, getting from under a vessel that overset upon the keel, defended his companions that were swimming from the moors".

From Faria's account of the disaster it does not appear that the Portuguese showed any degree of valour, for he admits that "about a hundred and fifty fled shamefully, many of them meeting death . . .

no persuasion being of force to bring them back. Doubtless, there were some condemned malefactors who were pardoned on account to serve in this expedition. None are greater cowards than infamous wicked men".

In the meanwhile, Belchior Ferreira who had patiently waited for the dawn delivered his attack in very good order on the landward side. He met with some measure of success. Breaking down the palisade at one point, he penetrated the outer defence and entered a portion of Kotta town where he destroyed several houses and damaged the mosque "when about 500 of Kunjali's men were killed".

This was the only gain for the allies on that fateful day on which the flower of the Portuguese army fell and the rest shamefully fled. Ferreira helped by the Zamorin's Nayars continued the fight till noon when realising the day was lost, he sounded the retreat and withdrew to the camp.[1]

During the engagement the young commander of the allied forces who had posted himself on the other side of the river opposite the fort attempted to send succour by boats to the landing party. He remained throughout the attack a mere spectator of the tragedy. Faria tells us that there was a shortage of boats. Even if there had been a surplus, Faria continues, "neither encouragement nor threat could induce the panic-stricken soldiers to embark in them". Waving his sword Louis da Gama rushed into the water and standing in the mud of the river bar up to the waist attempted to rally his men. His efforts proved futile. The sight of terrified fugitives swarming up the banks disheartened his soldiers. Thoroughly beaten, they had crossed the river in all haste, some swimming, others in boats, all shouting "treason, treason" as though the battle was lost through the treachery of someone. In the operations the Portuguese fleet could not attain to any combat value and played the role of transports, landing men and equipment on the beach well beyond the range of the fort guns.[2]

"So this proved the greatest disgrace the Portuguese received in Asia." With a show of accuracy De Couto gives the figures of the Portuguese slain at 230 and observes with evident satisfaction that Kunjali, with whom he claims to have talked the matter over in Goa, had told him that the loss of the besieged exceeded 500 men. Faria estimates it at 300 and adds by way of solace "that the greatest part was drowned". According to Pyrard's statement received from Portuguese source "no less than 500 lives" were lost on that fateful day "and among them forty of note".

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[1] Ferreira took six hours to appreciate the situation. He was helped by the Zamorin's Nayars and must have expended them recklessly. In a count made by Fr. Roz on the southern side of Kotta outside the wall, there were 100 Nayars slain with only four Portuguese dead.

[2] It is clear Kunjali's galliots played an effective role, for when Furtado attacked Kotta next year, he took care not to force his way upstream, but landed his men farther down the coast and transported seventeen ships overland into the river with the help of elephants.

Portuguese historians appear to be weak at figures when assessing relative strength and losses of the forces with whom they were engaged in hostilities. The odds were, in every case, against the Portuguese. Always they inflicted greater losses on the enemy than what they themselves suffered—a clear proof, abundantly to be met with in Anglo-Indian conflicts of a later period, of the superiority of European troops. To the credit of the Portuguese it has to be stated that they were able to bring back the body of Louis de Silva, their captain, and this was sent to Cannanore to be interred with all honours.[1]

The Zamorin who had hoped for an easy victory witnessed the debacle from the top of a hill. His Majesty was gloomy. Ferreira had used his Nayars rather recklessly but the large army under his own command had remained mere spectators. He knew that it would be dangerous to allow Kunjali to rest and reinforce, and that a blow struck while the enemy remained weak from the recent assault might yet give him the victory. The Portuguese were too badly mauled to be able to rally. Louis da Gama urged the Zamorin to deliver a grand assault. The king agreed, for he hoped to gain the whole credit for the victory for himself and be freed from any obligation to the Portuguese. With an army estimated by the Portuguese at 20,000 he delivered an attack from the landward side. The topography was unfavourable to the traditional mode of mass attack of the Nayars. Kunjali's guns played havoc with the Zamorin's men who thronged thick on the neck of the peninsula. The army was forced to retire.

Sad of heart and very much wiser, Louis da Gama retired to Cochin leaving a squadron to guard the entrance of the river. Portuguese morale was so low that none of the captains except D. Francis de Souza would accept the risk.[2] It was with difficulty that De Souza could keep his men with him, for some were seen escaping down the sides of his galley into the water. He ordered a boat to be brought for them and said that "he would keep none by force, nor have them go in danger". The deserters were greatly put to shame and they stayed.

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[1] The body was later conveyed to Portugal.

[2] Obviously it was not only the newly recruited felons who were cowards.

When the news of the disaster reached Goa, the city was plunged in gloom. The Viceroy concealed his sorrow in the presence of the people and awaited the official report. On the 15th March when the confirmation came from the Chief Captain, pandemonium broke loose in the city. Men and women rushed forth shrieking for "news of husbands, sons and brothers". The Viceroy remained composed. He summoned his council to meet three days later, hoping that the first paroxysm of grief would spend itself in the interval. When the council met, the Viceroy declared his determination to crush Kunjali and requested the Elders that he should be allowed to go against Kunjali in person and restore credit to the State. The council had little confidence in his leadership. To avert another disaster, they pointed out that the Viceroy's presence was needed in the city.The council decided that "the blockade of Kotta should be strictly maintained (it being known that the besieged were in want of supplies) and to hold the Zamorin steadfast in continuing the siege by land". Operations could be resumed only at the end of the North-West monsoon. The besieged would be weakened by starvation. Louis da Gama settled fresh terms with the Zamorin who was in a better position, having come off less badly scathed than the Portuguese. Ferdinand continued to blockade Kotta with twelve ships.

When Louis da Gama returned to Goa the Viceroy despatched him at once to Ormuz to fill the vacancy caused by the opportune death of the captain of that fort. The misconduct of the expedition was made the cause of a legal charge against him. The Viceroy had to exert his influence to the utmost to get an acquittal after a long and tedious trial.

It was sometime before the Portuguese could appoint a new leader. All eyes were now on Andre Furtado, a young and valiant captain, who had distinguished himself in several engagements from Al Cacar to Mannar. It was he who had inflicted a few years earlier a crushing defeat on Kunjali's fleet in the engagement on the Cadiga river and he had been generally successful in his encounters with the Malabar seamen.

Preparations were made for the next expedition. The annual fleet from Lisbon arrived with a large number of untrained recruits. Goa had not yet selected a commander. "There were men enough but they wanted a commander; neither was such a one wanting, but that the envy of the Portuguese endeavoured to rob Andre Furtado of that glory or rather their country of that advantage."[1] After some delay the council appointed Andre Furtado as the Chief Captain of Malabar. The Viceroy refused his assent. As the honour of his family had to be saved, he insisted on leading an army against Kunjali. The dispute was finally settled; Furtado was chosen and the fleet sailed for Kotta.

Kunjali was justifiably proud of his late victory. He caught the imagination of the people and the princes and lords began to have an eye upon his success. Kunjali thought of attracting all Moslems to his banner. He knew well that closely invested as he was, his destruction could not be long postponed unless help came from outside. He assumed the title of the Defender of the Faithful and styled himself the Expeller of the Portuguese hoping thereby to fire the imagination of the Moslem world from Cairo to Cambay and from Cannanore to Kallat. He vainly calculated that this move would attract Moslem princes and merchants to his cause. He hoped that Ali Raja of Cannanore who bore a grudge against the Portuguese and who, like him had rebelled against his suzerain, the Raja of Kolathiri, would come to his aid. He sent messengers to the Moslems of Ponnani and to the marine merchants of the coast. But no help came to him. The siege by land and sea was so effective that no succour could have reached Kunjali had any been sent. Greatly as they admired and feared Kunjali, they too had reasons to dislike him. Kunjali's seamen had not confined their attacks to the Portuguese ships, but on occasions "had plundered in other directions".

The only instalment of succour he received was from the heroic Queen of Ullal, Rani Thirumala Devi. In her wars with Banga Raja of Mangalore and against the Portuguese, Kunjali had assisted her with captains, ships and soldiers. The grateful queen sent 3,000 bags of rice and promised to send further assistance by sea. Noronha who lay before the port of Kotta took several of these vessels. He also slew some of Kunjali's men when they were taking fresh water from the mainland. The Nayak of Madura was prepared to give Kunjali an asylum. He was also ready to grant him permission to build a fort at Rameswaram. This, as stated in the *Litterae Annuae*, would have been calamitous to Portuguese interests. Kunjali held ships ready towards the south and once Kunjali could get aboard the Portuguese fleet would have been powerless against him. Andre Furtado had to be vigilant for he knew Kunjali was making overtures to the Zamorin in secret to permit him to escape.

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[1] Faria.

Furtado arrived before Kotta on the 15th December with a fleet of two galleys, twenty-two ships, five manchuas and eight periches. A strong contingent of northern boats joined the fleet. Together with Noronha's blockading fleet, the Portuguese had a total of three galleys and fifty-four other ships with a complement of 2,000 men. On his way to Kotta, he gained a diplomatic victory for he dissuaded the queen of Ullal and the Raja of Mangalore from assisting Kunjali.

As soon as Furtado had made his first dispositions, he arranged a ceremonial meeting with the Zamorin designed to strengthen their bonds and to concert plans for action. The previous commander had paid but scant courtesy to the Zamorin and his generals, but Furtado made ample amends.

On the 16th December the Zamorin and Furtado, both accompanied by large troops, met at Korichi, said to be the ancestral home of the Kunjalis. The troops were drawn up to form two large semi-circles round the place of meeting. Salvos of artillery and muskets were fired. The Zamorin, dressed in full regalia proceeded to meet the Chief Captain. It is perhaps the last recorded instance of a spurt of dynastic splendour, for shortly after, the dynasty fell on bad days and had to curtail its pomp and circumstance. Faria gives the following account of the meeting:

> 'The king was naked from the waist upwards. About his middle a piece of cloth of gold that reached several times about him and hung down to his knees fastened with a girdle of the breadth of a hand, of an inestimable value. His arms were covered to the wrists with gold bracelets set with rich stones. The weight of this treasure was so great that two men supported his arms. About his neck there was an extraordinary rich chain. In his

ears were so many rubies and diamonds as stretched them down with the weight. His age was about 30 years, his presence very majestic. A little to his side came the prince with his sword naked held up, behind him the nobility, and somewhat nearer him walked Francisco Roderigues, the Portuguese priest.

'The king and Furtado embraced each other when the whole fleet fired their cannon by way of a salute. Furtado put a rich collar on the King's neck over the other. The Zamorin conducted Furtado to the seats prepared for them and there, after the usual formal compliments, they spoke of the mode of conducting the war which the Zamorin promised to prosecute with redoubled vigour. He also told the chief captain that as soon as Kunjali saw the power of the Armada, then at his river, and learnt that he (Furtado) was its captain, a general so renowned and feared by the moors, forthwith he sent word to offer to capitulate on condition that his life and those of all the moors with him should be spared and that he, the Zamorin should come to the gates of the fortress to receive his surrender and thus secure him from violence at the hands of his Nairs, all which he had conceded with the intention of putting him to death as soon as he got him into his hands, because this is the proper policy in dealing with traitors, especially when they are such that it is impossible to expect that they will act otherwise on every available occasion. And that at the time fixed for surrender he (the Zamorin) sent his fencing master with some Nairs to receive Kunjali but the latter seeing that he, the Zamorin, was not there in person, that being a bad sign, sent his moors to the Nairs between whom there arose great strife, followed by a sharp conflict, in which many were wounded on both sides and that now there was no confidence between them. Therefore it was necessary to continue the war against that tyrant, for which purpose he offered everything needful so far as his kingdom could afford and that as earnest of his goodwill and faith he would give whatever hostages the chief captain should require, because everything must be done according to his opinion and wishes. Andre Furtado de Mendoza thanked him for his offers and made other suitable offers in return, whereupon they parted, the Zamorin adding that he would send the Padre Fransisco Roderigues and his regedores to his (Furtado's) galley, so that with them he might draw up such capitulations as he might deem necessary.... The Raja of Tannur was among these and they had full power to treat and conclude all things.'

Portuguese historians ascribe the origin of this base proposal to the Zamorin. The gallant Chief Captain did not remonstrate and was a partner in the treachery. In the terms of the treaty concluded soon after given in painstaking detail by De Couto, there is the significant omission of the fate to be meted out to Kunjali on his capture while the number of baskets and shovels the Zamorin had engaged himself to supply for the siege is mentioned. Both the king and the Chief Captain knew well what they proposed to do with regard to the rebel.

The annual fleet having arrived at Goa, Furtado received a further force of one galley, eleven ships and twenty-one other vessels. The vessels brought him 790 men and stores. The Zamorin sent 1,000 workmen, fifteen elephants, plenty of timber, an army of carpenters and 5,000 men for the siege. Besides these, he provided four ships with sailors and lascars to watch along the river to reinforce the thirty small boats already engaged on the task. According to the treaty the fortress was to be razed to the ground on its capture. The ships, goods, treasure and artillery were to be the property of the finders. The Zamorin agreed to erect a church and a factory at Calicut for the Portuguese.

Furtado was in no hurry, for while time was in his favour it went against the besieged. His entire forces were not assembled till the middle of February. The Zamorin who had left the scene in January to attend a religious festival was expected to return in February. Plans for the offensive were put through. Furtado made a personal inspection of the enemy's defences and erected several batteries.

Furtado learned that Kunjali had only 800 Moors inside the fort and that they suffered from scarcity of provision. He had with him over 1,200 Portuguese and over 12,000 Nayars of Calicut and some more from Cochin. He was unable to enter the mouth of the river where Kunjali had a row of galliots. Furtado had, therefore, great difficulty in sending seventeen ships into the river. He had them dragged overland with the help of men and elephants. Landing three leagues to the south of the town, he made extensive reconnaissance of the fort and the approaches from the landward side. He had the obstructions removed from the river channel to clear a passage. He knew his boats would not be safe unless he could neutralise the fort guns by his own heavy artillery. He threw up earthwork on the northern side of the river and from the entrenched positions erected at several points on the river bank, he was able to bombard the town itself. To meet this threat Kunjali ordered quick alteration in his defences, but before that could be completed, the Portuguese delivered an attack on the counter works, occupied it and held it against the most determined sorties.

The battering cannon now fired on the town of Kotta and the outworks. The Nayars and the Portuguese rushed in and drove the defenders away but they were in their turn expelled by Kunjali himself who brought up reinforcement. The fight was bitter. A few Portuguese captains fell and the attack wavered. It was Furtado who saved the situation. Sword in hand, he ran forward, rallied his men and led another attack. He was able to enter the outer works and quickly garrisoned it with 300 men. They stayed tight defeating all attempts of Kunjali to dislodge them. The heavy artillery was thus free to fire upon the town unchallenged. Furtado kept up the bombardment for five days. The town was in ruins, the bastion which guarded the town collapsed, and the bazaar was exposed to assault. Delay might prove dangerous. Kunjali might be relieved. The Zamorin might waver. The king had left the scene of battle in January to attend a religious festival during the first phase of the siege and he returned only in March. The siege, if prolonged, might lead him right into the monsoon. At this juncture, he received a letter from the Viceroy ordering him not to deliver an assault on the town. Furtado called a Council of Captains and secured their unanimous vote in favour of an assault in disregard of the instructions from Goa.

An attack was made on Fort Blanco—an outer bastion. Kunjali fought valiantly at the head of his men and repelled the attack.

The rebel admiral found his position untenable and the doom of Kotta certain. He reopened negotiations with the Zamorin and sent rich presents to placate his sovereign. It was agreed that on delivering himself up with 250 of his men to the Zamorin in the presence of Roderigues and Belchior, their lives would be spared. It was Kunjali's resolve that he would not surrender to any but the Zamorin. The Portuguese were his enemy, but the Zamorin was his king and if he had offended His Majesty, he would now ask his pardon. The Zamorin was disposed to accede to these terms.

The surrender of the rebel admiral was sufficient salve to his offended majesty. There was a growing section of his people openly in sympathy with Kunjali. Many of his soldiers too did not relish this war. The role of Belchior in these negotiations is not clear. He was probably a spy with instructions to work his way into the confidence and counsels of the king. Kunjali came out with 250 of his men to present himself before the Zamorin. Belchior, taking advantage of this, rushed in with his men and set fire to the stockades, houses and the ships that were in or about it. The Calicut Nayars were enraged by this act of perfidy. This piece of Portuguese treachery made Kunjali believe that the Zamorin had agreed to his surrender only to deceive him. No doubt this was what Belchior had intended should happen. Kunjali retired within the fort.

Furtado knew that Kunjali would make further moves for peace with his king. An amicable settlement of their dispute had to be prevented at any cost for not only would Portuguese interests suffer, but his own reputation as well. Furtado acted quickly. He proposed to lead an attack on the town, called upon the Zamorin to join and thus break off negotiation. The final assault on the town was delivered on the 7th March 1600. De Souza leading his detachment of 400 men attacked from the east and Pallota assaulted the bastion on the river bar. With a force of 1,200 Portuguese, Furtado joined the Zamorin on the landward side to overawe the wavering ally.

The Zamorin wanted Kunjali's surrender, but not his death. Furtado wanted both. Kunjali would not surrender to any but the Zamorin. The Zamorin and Furtado hit upon a solution. It was arranged between them that the Zamorin should agree to receive the surrender of Kunjali. At the surrender Kunjali was to be seized by Furtado by a show of force and thus taken off the Zamorin's hands to be dealt with as he pleased.

Let the rest of the story be told by De Couto.

'In his extremity of want Kunjali sent envoys to the Zamorin heartily beseeching him to have mercy upon him and enquiring whether, if he should deliver himself up, the Zamorin would promise to spare the lives of him and his followers; this the Zamorin conceded and the agreement was ratified by the Olas

> of the parties. This negotiation the Zamorin communicated to the chief captain (Furtado), begging him to confirm it in which case he (Zamorin) would promise to give over to him Kunjali and some of his captains. Furtado made answer that His Highness should act as he proposed and that he was quite satisfied.
>
> 'Kunjali . . . decided to yield himself up to the Zamorin, if he could obtain to have his life spared. But, as he related to his guards he dreamt during the night that the Zamorin would give him up to the Admiral who would condemn him to die. They say that then he armed himself urged the troops to make a sudden sortie, but the soldiers let him know that it would be foolish to offer themselves to die like that. Then some of the pseudo Priests taking him aside and reciting some prayers over him persuaded him that he would not die and that no confidence should be placed in dreams. The moors asked for an interview with the Admiral, but the latter knowing their cunning told them he had nothing to do with them, if, however they desired to speak with the Zamorin, the messenger should do so with one of his captains who would see to it that he did not speak with anybody else. The moors accepted. They had two interviews and the Zamorin sent word that towards evening he would send a report of what had taken place. But he (Kunjali) would not come himself till through Emmanuel Gasper he was assured that no evil would be done to him.[1]
>
> 'This assurance of safety which Kunjali asked for was granted, for Kunjali prepared to surrender himself along with some of his principal followers.'

Furtado made no commitment in writing. He expected an emeute of his Nayars if he surrendered the brave admiral after he had agreed to spare his life. The Zamorin took measures to prevent rebellion among his soldiers. Several days passed. Furtado lost all patience and threatened an assault. The Zamorin immediately became active and sent messengers to Kunjali. It was agreed between them that the surrender should take place on the 16th March.

It was a sultry day. The Calicut Nayars and the Portuguese forces were drawn up outside the gate of the fort facing each other. The

[1] *Litterae Annuae*, Society of Jesus, quoted in *Jesuits in Malabar*, Fr. Ferroli.

southern gate of the citadel opened and the gallant remnants of the garrison marched out between them.

> 'First came 400 moors, many of them wounded, with their children and wives, in such an impoverished condition that they seemed as dead. These the Zamorin bade go where they pleased. Last of all came Kunjali with a black kerchief on his head, and a sword in his hand with the point lowered. He was at that time a man of fifty, of middle height, muscular and broad-shouldered. He walked between three of his chief Moors. One of these was Chinali a Chinese who had been servant at Malacca, and said to have been the captive of a Portuguese, taken as a boy from a fusta and afterwards brought to Kunjali, who conceived such an affection for him that he trusted him with everything.
>
> 'Kunjali walked straight to the Zamorin and delivered to him his sword in token of submission, throwing himself at his feet with much humility. Some say, that the Zamorin, inasmuch as he had promised him life, had secretly advised the chief captain, when Kunjali should deliver himself up, to lay hands upon him, as though he were taking him by force, and so the chief captain did. For, as the Zamorin was standing by him Andre Furtado advanced, and seizing him by the arm, pulled him aside, while the other gave a great lurch so as to be free. As he was then at the brink of a hole, the Chief Captain was in risk of falling therein, had not his arm been seized by Padre Fr. Diogo Homen who stood on one side. Diogo Baretto who was on the other, fell into the hole and skinned all his leg.'

This treachery was revolting to the code of honour of the Nayar soldiers who would not have the Portuguese lay hands on their brave countryman in violation of the well-known terms of surrender. A tumult arose among the Calicut Nayars who fell upon the Portuguese in an attempt to rescue the captive. Kutti Ali, the nephew of Kunjali, and China Ali took advantage of the confusion to escape but they were seized and manacled by the Portuguese. Kunjali, having surrendered his sword, could not strike a blow for his freedom. The Portuguese hurried him away under a strong escort to their lines leaving the Zamorin to suppress the tumult, which he did with the utmost difficulty.

The allies made a ceremonial entry into the fort. Furtado and the Zamorin entered the gate, hand in hand, to the triumphant roar of drums and blare of bugles. The Zamorin gave up the town to be sacked by his soldiers and so diverted their mind from dwelling on the sordid incident. But there was little to be gained, for the valuables had been sent away elsewhere. It was believed that Kunjali had hidden his immense treasure all over the island and a great treasure hunt began, and this gave rise to quarrels between the Nayars and the Portuguese and not a few were killed on both sides. The Portuguese got Kunjali and forty of his chief men. The allies divided the artillery.

The last act was done by Furtado. He razed the fort to the ground and set fire to the bazaars,[1] town and mosque.

The Zamorin gave Furtado a gold leaf on which the terms of a treaty of friendship were inscribed.

A tragic fatality attended Kunjali in all his encounters with Furtado. In the battle of Cadiga, Kunjali suffered a crushing blow. In 1591, Furtado had defeated the great fleet of Kutti Musa, Kunjali's nephew, in the battle of Manar. This time it was his total ruin.

That was the end of Kotta and the eclipse of an intrepid naval tradition as surely as that was the end of the prestige and glory of Calicut.

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[1] Much booty was burned, of the rest both Portuguese and Nayars possessed themselves. The Moors had buried much treasure. To unearth this were sent everywhere one Nayar and one Portuguese, but . . . there was fear of great quarrels. In fact one of the Chief Nayars was killed. The matter was brought to the king who promised that through Fr. Roz, he would inform the Admiral and have the culprit punished. But they shouted and threatened that they had no king because he used the Portuguese instead of them in settling the business and their fury went so far that, when the Zamorin had given orders that Fr. Roz should be sent for, some Nayars, with swords raised, suddenly came after him and they would have killed him, if the heir apparent had not freed him. Fr. Ferroli, *Jesuits in Malabar*.

NINETEEN

A Triumph

DON FURTADO set sail for Goa on Saturday, the 25th March, with his famous captive well secured in chains and the rich booty captured at Kotta. On his way, he halted at Cannanore where a grand welcome was given to the hero, partly to honour the exploit and partly to overawe the neighbouring Moslem population, who had continually proved troublesome to the Portuguese.

Here, Don Furtado received a letter from Don Francisco da Gama, the Viceroy, ordering him to proceed at once to Quilon and destroy the town.[1] The Viceroy would not let the hero rest on his laurels. He had cause to be envious of the success of Furtado, for his brother had on the previous occasion suffered a humiliating defeat at Kunjali's hands and he now sought to deny Furtado the honour of a triumphal entry into Goa.

Furtado called a Council of his Captains to consider the Viceroy's letter. They decided unanimously to disobey the orders. The war-heroes meant to celebrate the event.

The fleet proceeded north to Goa and appeared off the bar of Goa on the 11th April. Furtado sent a formal report of his arrival to the Viceroy. He explained to the Viceroy that after the engagement at Kotta his ships were not in a condition to proceed to Quilon without repairs and refitting. After attending to these he would proceed with all speed to Quilon and reduce the place. Da Gama, sore at heart, concealed his ill-feeling and instructed the municipality of Goa to honour the hero. In the meanwhile, the Veredores or Aldermen waited upon Don Furtado, and requested him to remain at Panjim for the space of three or four days, as preparations for the reception were not complete.

These civic delays postponed Kunjali's final forfeit.

The Viceroy, having been forced by public enthusiasm to concede a civic welcome to the victor, now sought to diminish his glory by obstructing certain details of the programme. Learning that Furtado intended to march his famous captive in front of himself in the procession, Da Gama, in another fit of jealousy, pointed out that this course was totally without precedent and greatly inconvenient to the spectators. The proper procedure in such circumstances was to send the captives in advance to be quietly secreted away into the Tronco by the prison authorities and for the hero to make his own separate entry.

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[1] This was meant to be a reprisal, for the citizens of Quilon had attacked the Portuguese in the town.

Furtado did not wish to antagonise the Viceroy. He agreed to bring the prisoners to the quay and officially hand them over to the prison authorities in the presence of the citizens. The Archbishop of Goa made several journeys between the Viceroy and the visitor to settle the details.

A great number of boats, gaily decorated with banners and branches of trees and carrying musicians, now put out from the city, an equally large number from Bardes and converged on the fleet. "In the middle way came the ships, firing their guns amid such noise of instruments, as well martial as of lighter sort, such as drums and fifes, bagpipes and trumpets."

The ships were directed to moor in front of the Gallery of the Viceroy. From this point to the Cathedral where they were to go in procession for the thanksgiving ceremony, the streets were decorated with green trees and branches. The houses were hung for the occasion with festoons and awnings. The Veredore and the Archbishop stood at the entrance of the city, close by the massive gate. Behind, the crowd of citizens extended as far as one could see.

One of the ships drew up against the quay and a servant of Andre Furtado landed, under orders from his master, four or five Moplas captured in the war. The reaction of the crowd was spontaneous and violent. They were stoned to death on the spot. The chief police magistrate (Ouvidor General de Crime) and his corps made great efforts to restore order. It was with the utmost difficulty that he could extricate himself from the hands of the furious mob. The Viceroy feared greater violence and disorder when Kunjali should appear. He despatched the Ouvidor General de Crime at once to Furtado's ship directing him to take Kunjali secretly to the prison. Chroniclers have not recorded Furtado's reply on this occasion, but it is clear from the subsequent behaviour of the distracted magistrate that the words were not fit for the Viceroy's ear. Furtado would not comply with the Viceroy's request. The police magistrate, afraid of the Viceroy's anger, insisted on carrying Kunjali away. Furtado had to yield and Kunjali was taken away.

The victor, burning with indignation and suspecting the Viceroy of being jealous of his triumph, refused to land at the quay where the crowd was clamouring for his appearance, and to take part in the triumphal progress. He would make a private landing at Madre de Dios. He moved his ship further up the river. The Viceroy, on hearing the cause of Furtado's behaviour, reproved the magistrate and had him suspended from office for two months. As may be expected the people were enraged at the treatment given to their hero. Preparations made several days in advance had come to nothing. They broke loose and went wild. In their fury they tore down the decorations and pulled down the triumphal arches that had been set up on the route. The thanksgiving service could not be held till long after and when it took place at last, we are told, Furtado did not take any part in it.

Kunjali in manacles was secretly led to the Tronco and this proved no easy task with the mob wild and loose everywhere in the city. The palace of the Viceroy had a postern opening on the river side at the sheltered end of the quay called Ferrero Grande. A great part of the crowd was now gathered together in the Campo del Passor, a magnificent square on the town-side of the palace, and in the Bazaar Grande, the city's circular esplanade, uncertain as to its next course.

The Tronco, a sombre structure of gloomy associations,[1] was situated to the left of the palace and constituted one of its wings; to the right were the royal arsenal and the magazines. Here, within its cold walls were witnessed acts of horror and perfidy for which the annals of man's tyranny offer few parallels. The Viceroy detached a section of his personal guard, clad in blue and carrying halberts, for the safety of the prisoner. His personal responsibility was great for he knew that the citizens would demand a public exhibition of Kunjali and he had to be alive to be produced. Besides, there was that insolent Andre Furtado waiting for things to go wrong to blame him. At every entrance to the courtyard of the palace, the guard was increased. The Ruo Dreche, Goa's Broadway, stretched in front with a menacing surge of disappointed citizens. Half way down the street there rose the huge sanguine pile of the Casa de Santa Inquisitione casting its long dark shadow over the people. Opposite the palace, standing solidly over against the square was the Cambra Presidialo, the principal Court of Justice in India. But in the administration of Portuguese justice, the arm of the Viceroy reached longer than the arm of the law.

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[1] This was the notorious prison. Pyrard relates how a large number of Moplas imprisoned in the Tronco committed suicide rather than endure the tortures to which they were subjected.

It is not clear how long Kunjali was shut up in the Tronco. There were, besides him, forty Mopla prisoners whom the Zamorin had surrendered to the Portuguese, distributed in the cells. The Viceroy was taken ill suddenly and Kunjali's trial had to be postponed. On recovering from his illness after two days, the Viceroy sent word to the judges "to sentence Kunjali off hand". The judges, thus ordered, went through the formalities of legal process. Kunjali was arraigned, evidence was let in and his several crimes firmly established. The condition on which he had surrendered and the solemn engagement that his life was to be spared were forgotten. Kunjali knew well what was in store for him and he was reconciled to his fate. But his brave and restless spirit chafed not so much at Portuguese perfidy as at the Portuguese victory by which the palm-fringed shores of his homeland would be ravaged and its people enslaved or killed. The Zamorin would repent; of that, he was certain; but the repentance would not save him, for this great war begun by Vasco da Gama exactly a century ago and pursued through all its varying fortunes could end only one way. It was either Goa or Calicut. Calicut had grown weak. With the backbone of the Zamorin's naval defence broken, it was a matter of days before the Portuguese, seeking a pretext, would reopen hostilities, as they had done in the past, and defeat the Zamorin. He remembered his ancestors, all brave admirals, who died at their post of duty, in the service of their king. He remembered his many friends and kinsmen, killed or captured, on land and sea. His own men had fought bravely and inflicted on the flower of Portuguese chivalry, "the greatest defeat they had ever suffered in Asia".

And to imagine that the young ruler of Calicut thought more of of an elephant's tail than these!

Kunjali felt that he should have made a last stand and sold his life and the lives of his followers dearly. All he wanted now was a ship and a chance. But how could that be!

In the gloom of the Tronco, his thoughts went back to his last meeting with his mother, the last embrace and her last words as she took a silk *rumal* from her son's neck: "Son, if they do any harm to you, send me a sign. Be brave, Allah preserve you."[1] Sometimes, the thought of the gross perfidy scorched his mind. He would not lose all hope. He had fanatical followers, brave and expert seamen, now scattered all over the coast. They would rally under a vengeful leadership and sail the seas again, a terror to the Portuguese, as he had been. Vellian para[2] would be bathed in blood and his mother would see it, when she turns to the west in prayer.

Kunjali was not destined to see his beloved country again which the blood and sacrifice of his dynasty had protected from the Portuguese for a century. The Court of Justice "after masking the perfidy of the State with the semblance of legal process",[3] finally delivered its sentence. Kunjali was to be beheaded, and his body quartered. The other prisoners were likewise ordered to be beheaded.

The religious orders (there were then in Goa as many as fifty churches and monasteries) at least were moved by a generous impulse to save the soul of the man whose head they would not save. Kunjali was given no peace by these kindly evangels. "The Religious of all Orders visited him many times inviting and entreating him to seek entrance within the fold of our Lord Jesus Christ. They laboured heartily to gain that soul and add it to the flock of the Lord." Kunjali remained perverse. "Kunjali, however refused to yield", laments De Couto.

The day of his execution came. Kunjali spent the night in prayers. In the silence of his cell, he could hear the mattocks driving in the nails of the scaffold on which he was to die.

The Matadeiro,[4] where the common felons of the city used to be executed was inconveniently far out of the town. So a special scaffold was erected in the large square, the Campo del Passor,[5] in front of the Viceroy's palace. An immense crowd had gathered, Dons, Fidalgos, Soldados, all Orders of the Clergy, scholars from

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[1] The information was supplied by P. M. Abdur Rahaman Kutty Haji, one of the descendants of Kunjali whom I interviewed at Kotta in 1951.

[2] This rock of white basalt rising sheer from the sea about seven miles off Quilandy has many legends associated with it. This rock is visible from Kotta.

[3] Faria: "So did the Governor and the rabble go hand in hand in murder and breach of faith."

[4] The place of cow-killing or a slaughter-house.

[5] The Court-square where the nobles and courtiers assemble.

St. Paul de Goa, Metices, Mulastres,[1] Castici,[2] Canarins, women of quality—a sea of spectators. Fresh streams of spectators came pouring into the square along the roads down the Rao Grando and the Hatter's street and along the *pillorilla vieyo*.[3] Decrepit wretches from the Hospital de St. Lazre crutched their way to the edge of that great crowd to see the end of Goa's dreaded and mighty enemy. From the fifty great churches, and out of the streets of the Banias and the Canarins poured forth more men and women —a welter of palanquins and sombreros and parasoles.

A fanfare announced the arrival of the Viceroy who came upon the terrace overlooking the square. To his left was the Archbishop. Kunjali was led to the scaffold. "He was fifty years of age, fair, thick set and broadbreasted." He was of "a low stature, well-shaped and strong". With him was China Ali, a Chinese youth whom Kunjali had rescued from a Portuguese ship. Kunjali conducted himself with "great dignity and courage which won the respect of his pitiless foes". The crowd had strangely become silent. He cast his eyes over that vast multitude and bent his neck. There was an ominous roll of the drums. And the axe fell.

The Portuguese of the latter days obviously did not know where to stop. A century ago Portugal had sent out to India her heroes: now they were mostly tyrants. From Pacheco to Azvedo was a fall as steep as from St. Xavier to De Menezes.

The execution went on for several days. Kunjali's nephew and all the rest of the forty prisoners given over by the Zamorin were, likewise, put to death and "not one that was taken, escaped".

Kunjali's body was quartered and exhibited on the beach at Bardes and Panjim. "His head was salted and conveyed to Cannanore, there to be stuck on a standard for a terror to the moors."

At Kotta, in vain did Kunjali's mother keep her vigil for the return of her son. But a sign came to her, so the legends preserved in the family say. At the moment the fatal axe fell on Kunjali's neck, a splash of blood dyed the *rumal* red, and the mother knew her valiant son would come back to her no more. It is this *rumal* that is said to be buried under his memorial tomb beside the tomb of his mother at Kotta.[1]

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[1] Those born of a Portuguese father and a negro mother. Also called Mulattos.

[2] This is Pyrard's misprint for Castici which should be Casticos, "of good birth". Teixeira Pinto in his *Memorias Sobre as Poss. Port* makes the distinctions clear as follows: Children of native Christians are Canarins while Casticos are those born in India of pure Portuguese blood.

[3] The old pillory where seven streets meet.

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[1] This story was narrated to me by P. M. Abdur Rahaman Kutty Haji, one of the surviving members of the dynasty of Kotta.

It is greatly to be regretted that the tomb of Kunjali is left in sad neglect. The masonry is crumbling under a dilapidated thatched roof. The floor is not paved and consists of loose mud. Around the place live several wealthy Moplas!

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TWENTY

A Sequel

ON THE eastern side of the city of Goa there was a fine esplanade, La Ribeira das Gales, which ran along the river side. In the river lay the galleys of Goa built after the fashion of the Spanish galleys, large rowing vessels which required three men to an oar. On the shore were rows of workshops where convicts in chains, who were daily marched from the galle, worked hard to manufacture the equipment for the galleys. These convicts were unransomed captives of war and consisted of Arabs, Turks and Malabar seamen.

During his stay in Goa between June and October 1608, Pyrard de Laval, the French traveller, met a handsome young man of about thirty years of age whose career provides an example of the high spirit of adventure of the Indian seamen of those days. He was a cousin of Kunjali and the brother of Captain Kutty Ahmed of Badagara whose hospitality Pyrard had enjoyed during his sojourn in Malabar. In 1591, as a boy of thirteen, he went with Kunjali's fleet on an ill-fated expedition. Off Cardiva, Kunjali came upon the Portuguese Armada del Sud, consisting of fifty war galliots commanded by Don Furtado. In the battle which followed Furtado was victorious. He took much booty and many prisoners to Goa, among them this young cousin of Kunjali, who, by virtue of his noble birth, received some measure of consideration. The Portuguese never exchanged these Indian seamen for ransom. He was subsequently baptised, and in recognition of his high birth given the name of Don Pedro Rodrigues. He married a Portuguese orphan. He did not work like the rest of the convicts, and had command over a squad of prisoners. All the same, he was in chains, like the others.[1]

When his cousin, the last of the Kunjalis, was beheaded in Goa, Don Pedro was in the city. Perhaps stricken with anguish, he was somewhere in that vast crowd of spectators who witnessed his brave kinsman's doom. Pyrard met him, still a convict and in chains, eight years after that event.

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[1] "As for the Indian prisoners taken by the Portuguese, they will belong to the King who gives a reward of ten pardoes to the soldiers for each prisoner taken; and though the prisoners were to offer all the gold in the world as ransom, they cannot recover their liberty."—Pyrard, *The Voyage of François Pyrard of Laval*, Hakluyt Society, London, 1888.

He had at that time spent seventeen years in captivity and during all those years he had been planning to escape and revenge himself on his enemies.

His hopes ran high when the Dutch fleet blockaded and bombarded the harbour of Goa in 1604. But nothing came of it. Pyrard met him several times. "I accosted him several times and spoke to him for the sake of his brother, who took a liking for me and gave me a good reception when I passed by Badgara and Marakkar Kotta."[1]

All that we know is this. One night Don Pedro Rodrigues succeeded in making his escape with his family from Goa. With almost nothing to start his career except his courage and genius, this young man gathered a few devoted followers, armed some paroes and proceeded along the Indian coast paying fearful attention to the Portuguese settlements. He paid particular attention to the priests whom he plundered. Some of the old sailors of Kotta heard of his exploits and joined him. In 1618 he had five war-paroes fully armed and well-manned by sailors drawn from the Konkan and Malabar coast.

When the exploits of Don Pedro directed with ruthless energy against Portuguese shipping and settlements became known, there was a flare-up of naval activity all along the coast. In these operations which Portuguese historians describe as piracy, Indian seamen received assistance from the Dutch who had now begun to oppose actively Portuguese marine interests. The Hollanders were in correspondence with the Zamorin in 1616 and also with the Raja of Tanore. The presence of the Dutch, the French and the English in Indian waters, all jealous of the Portuguese, revived the spirit of Indian resistance to Goa. All along the coast, from Cambay, Konkan and Kerala, seamen boldly ventured forth and attacked Portuguese vessels with impunity. The Rajas of the coast assisted these seamen and claimed a share of the booty. The European rivals of the Portuguese supplied Indian princes with cannon and other armament. On the high seas there was an understanding between Indian seamen and the Dutch to render mutual help against the Portuguese and not to molest each other.

So great was their fear of the Cambayans, Konkanis, Malabarese and Hollanders, that the Portuguese now ventured forth only in Cafilas—a great convoy of 300 or 400 vessels. "At Goa, the whole city looks out for these cafilas as in Spain they await those of the Indies. And when they arrive not at their due season, every one is in apprehension of the Hollanders, or the Malabaris, or the Cambayanes themselves who frequently stop them when they endeavour to put in at Goa, as happened the year I left Goa."[1] On one occasion the fleet could not get into the harbour of Goa for more than two months on account of the Indian blockade "in so much that all were already crying famine". This, we are told by Pyrard, was for a grievance the king of Cambay had against the Viceroy of Goa who had refused him something. The Cambay fleet lay off Goa bottling up the Goan fleet in the harbour.

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[1] Pyrard.

Pyrard proceeds.

"When this fleet, the Cafila does arrive the joy of the merchants and the whole people is marvellous; and in truth it is a very pretty and pleasant sight to see so many sails together; but it is seldom that the Malabar corsairs fail to capture some of them." The Portuguese resorted to speedy movement as a means of escape from Indian attack. "Every ship or galliot is worked by oars so as to keep the coast and to speed against the wind. They have some war-galliots for their escort."[2] When the fleet arrived at Goa there was jubilant firing of cannon from the shore batteries.

The Malabar seamen hovered on the Portuguese ship-route to Diu. "The people there carry merchandise to and from Cambay in great barges of 15 and 20 tons burthen each, with a full cargo each way. The Malabar corsairs make their profit out of these, for they seize as many as they like, and I have seen them while I was there, seize at one swoop forty or fifty of them; and that was no uncommon occurrence."[3]

Pyrard describes another incident which illustrates the understanding between Indian seamen and the Dutch. A great Portuguese ship from Cochin was set upon by some Malabar paroes and the latter, finding that they could not take it, called to assistance a Dutch ship. The combined attack helped them to seize the Portuguese ship. The booty was shared, each party behaving with generosity to the other.

Thus the seamen of the coast became once again active. Soon after the fall of Kunjali the Portuguese used to insist on all Indian

[1] Pyrard. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid.

ships saluting the Portuguese flag, but now they went on the defensive and their ships sailed in constant dread.

At Trikkoti a squadron of Portuguese vessels commanded by George de Castilio saw a lone Indian galliot with 170 sailors and attacked it in all assurance of an easy victory. The galliot directed its fire so skilfully that the Portuguese got into a panic. Some of the vessels deserted. Indian seamen boarded the flagship and "killed all men". On hearing this, Don Henry de Souza sailed with eleven ships towards Calicut on a mission of retaliation and succeeded in burning a great ship belonging to the Zamorin, "which was loaded and ready to sail for Mecca".

Let us now return to Don Pedro.

Faria gives the following brief account of Don Pedro's further exploits.

In the year 1618, "while our Admiral of the Malabar sea was upon the coast, Don Pedro, commanding five paros took several of our ships and hindered the trade. Our general, D. Constantine de Sa sent from Colombo 40 galliots to Manar to join 18 small vessels there and destroy that pirate. They set out on the Eve of Ascension and being parted by a storm, met on the 18th at the island of Golayo. Victorio de Abrew, who being informed by two blacks, that the five paros were gone to some place near for ammunition and that before they returned, he might possess himself of goods of the value of 30,000 ducats left there by Don Pedro in a house, he made light of this intelligence and staying for the enemy reposed a bit, lost 12 out of the 18 sail and about 300 besides those that were taken, whereof he was one".

After this amazing exploit we hear more about him from the same source.

"Meanwhile our squadron convoyed the fleet after such a manner that the same pirate took a vessel without their offering to defend it", which is another way of saying that Don Pedro, with only five paroes, attacked a whole fleet under convoy and managed to make a prize. The pirate, thereafter, sailed away to Maldives.

Unfortunately we have no more information about Don Pedro. I have searched in vain for a Malayalam ballad about this man which is believed to exist.

Such is the sequel. The ghost of Kunjali was once again roving far and wide on the western sea. The Portuguese lost their maritime prestige and monopoly and though their ships sailed in Indian waters for a few more decades, their naval power had already received its death blow. From 1498 to 1630, a period of over a hundred years, our seamen struck and struck again, sometimes vanquished, soon revived, incessantly fighting, mingling their blood with the brine to keep the pirates away and defend our land. While we admire Portuguese tenacity and enterprise, let us remember too the heroism and patriotic daring of our seamen but for whose sacrifice and service, Goa might have extended along the littoral right up to Cape Kanya Kumari.

Names and Description of Vessels

Almadia: An Arabic word for a large raft, but generally used for an Indian canoe also.

Ballam: A large rowing vessel.

Battad: A small dhow with a square flat stern, used in Western India.

Caravel: A vessel of about 200 tons with lateen sails, and noted for its speed.

Carrack: Merchant vessel of high tonnage, going up to 2,000 tons. It had lofty overhanging bow and stern castles, and deep holds. It had three or four decks. The masts were tall and carried artillery in the tops. It was intended mainly for trade and not for war.

Catamaran: A Tamil word for a navigable raft of logs fastened together.

Cature: *Catapanel*: A light rowing vessel eighty feet in length.

Dhoney: Toney: A flat bottomed boat of about the same length as a *catapanel.*

Galleon: A standard fighting ship. They were of 600 tons, longer, narrower, and lower in the water than merchantmen of the same tonnage, though high-built by later standards.

Galliot: Small coasters, sometimes used in war, fore and aft rigged. It had oars. Galliots were frequently towed.

Galley, Galleasses: Warships purely, usually cruised under sail, but used oars in battle. Lightly gunned, they were long and narrow and low in water. They had high fire-power and speed.

Kappal: Indian ships made on the same model as European ships, especially in the bottom.

Manchua: A large cargo boat with single square sail.

Patamar: A lateen-rigged ship with one, two or three masts, of 200 tons burden.

Parao, padao: A peculiar kind of galley propelled by oars, and about forty feet long.

Parangue: A kind of cargo boat.

Sambuk: A small vessel for coast to ship communication.

Sampan: A skiff.

Sanguical: A light speedy war boat.

A NOTE ON THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY SHIP'S GUNS

The cannon used on the ships was of medium length. It was called a demi-cannon and had a nine-foot barrel with a six-inch bore capable of throwing a thirty-two pound round shot point blank to a distance of about 500 yards. The culverin was a long gun, believed to be capable of throwing an eighteen pound ball for 700 yards point blank, and at random, for an extreme range of two miles. The arquebus, a small fire-arm carried by the soldier, was introduced in India around 1540.

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The principal source of illustrations found in this book is the *Livro do Estado da India* of Pedro Baretto Rezende (Sloane Collection No. 197 in the British Museum Library, Manuscript room). My acknowledgements are due to the British Museum, and the British Council, Madras.

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